

YOLK

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jet li

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john woo

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lea salonga

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one voice

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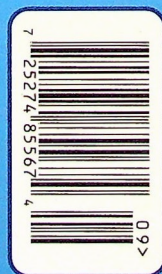
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A full-page advertisement featuring Ludacris. He is wearing a dark blue hoodie, blue jeans, and tan Dada Supreme boots. He is leaning against a dark wall, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the boots. The text 'LUDACRIS' is in the top right, 'DADA SUPREME' is in the center, and 'DADAFOOTWEAR.COM' is at the bottom left.

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(brand clothing)

This brief summary provides important information about Generasian™ brand clothing. For more information on these products, please consult www.YOLKshop.com or call toll-free (800) 436-9655.

INDICATIONS Generasian™ brand clothing is indicated for a display of Asian American pride. It is also used to treat the signs and symptoms of deficiency in Asian American pride. Individual results may vary.

VARIATIONS Generasian™ brand clothing is available in t-shirt form with Streamline or Tekno style logos. It is also available in sweatshirt form with the Tekno logo. For women only, a Bubblegum style is available in tank top form. Consult www.YOLKshop.com for the prescription best for you.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS In shirt form, Generasian™ brand clothing contains a base of 100% pre-shrunk cotton. In hooded sweatshirt form, it contains a blend of 55% polyester and 45% cotton. In addition, it may contain either an ink-based design (up to two colors), or an embroidered design. Consult www.YOLKshop.com for up-to-date information.

RECOMMENDED DOSAGE For best results, one or more variations of Generasian™ products should be worn at least once a day, for as often as possible, or as recommended by your doctor or pharmacist. Generasian™ tank tops are recommended for women only, and should be worn during warm weather. Generasian™ sweatshirts should only be worn during cold weather. All Generasian™ products are for external use only. It is important that Generasian™ brand clothing be cleaned regularly for maximum effect. When not in use, Generasian™ products should be stored in a dry, cool place. **Alternatives:** Should your symptoms persist, try a different variation of Generasian™ or a recommended safe and acceptable alternative, such as Got Rice™ and Riceburner™ clothing [also available from www.YOLKshop.com].

CONTRAINDICATIONS At this time, Generasian™ brand clothing should not be administered to small children or infants. Generasian™ tank tops are not recommended for men. Generasian™ brand clothing should not be administered to individuals showing symptoms of Yellow Fever. Misuse of Generasian™ products in this manner may cause possible physical or psychological injury.

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GENERASIAN™ brand clothing is available in the following variations. Please consult www.YOLKshop.com for availability.

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GENERASIAN Tekno

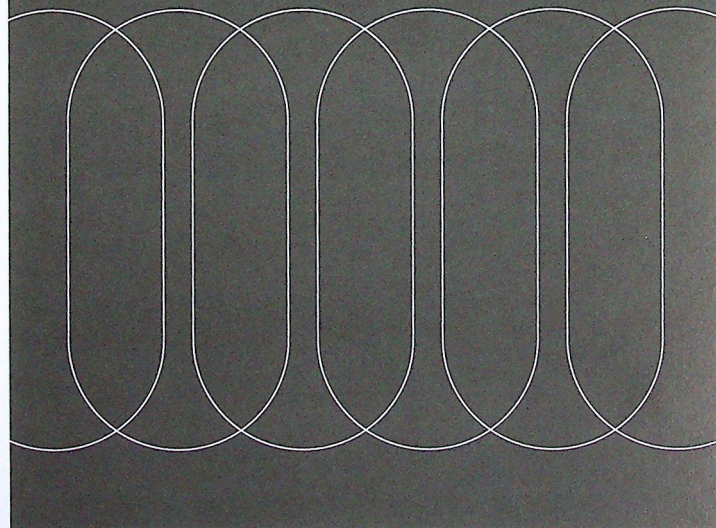
Generasian Bubblegum

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Cover photo: Huey Tran • Stylist: Brandy St. John • Make-up: Sonia Lee/Chris Willis Artist Management
Hair: Yukiko Kinkel • Top by Sharagano, Paris; jeans by Joe's Jeans, accessories available at Jennifer Kaufman, Los Angeles

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Loss & Humanity

I am truly at a loss for words as I write this Editor's Slant. The tragic events of September 11th have undoubtedly affected YOLK just as viscerally as the rest of the country. We here at YOLK headquarters all mourn the loss of thousands of American citizens who perished on that horrific day, and our collective prayers, thoughts, and hearts go out to them.

As for me personally, I also feel that like other media (especially here in Tinseltown where Hollywood happenings are given a ridiculous amount of reverence), putting out a bi-monthly magazine about Asian American entertainment, pop culture, and lifestyle feels insignificant in times like these. In the shadow of the WTC attacks, coming to the YOLK office has been a bit surreal. For many days, I was dumbstruck as to 'why' and 'what' I was doing here. I know that all of us responded this way. I honestly don't remember any day in YOLK's history where the phones did not ring off the hook. Well, in the immediate days after the 11th, it was like a ghost town here and we've all been feeling an undeniable weight in our hearts.

What angers and saddens me the most is the progressive wave of ignorance and hatred shown by Americans toward their neighbors and fellow countrymen just because they happen to "look like the enemy." The resulting violence perpetrated against a growing number of American citizens has me sick to my stomach. Glued to the tube most mornings and evenings, I'm actually surprised that the US government hasn't corralled these "suspicious" individuals and thrown them into camps the way Japanese Americans were at the onset of WWII. As the numbers of hate crimes against people of Middle Eastern descent increase day by day, I am convinced that America has not learned its lesson in scapegoating, bigotry, and intolerance.

Alas, I am not a politician. My own political leanings, rhetoric, and overall passion for the Asian American community and America at large are instead expressed and given room to breathe through my work as Editor-in-Chief of this publication and as a performance artist, workshop facilitator/teacher, and independent filmmaker. I'm thankful that I am part of a professional and solid team that strives to present and portray Asians (still the "invisible" minority) in a humanistic fashion.

That's all we can do in these unstable times—to give voice and exposure to a huge percent of the American population that are still somehow considered "not American enough." I hope that readers (old and new) can look beyond the "image" of our pictorials and truly see the heart and sincerity of all subjects and personalities that grace the pages of YOLK.

Enjoy the issue.

Peace,
Alex Luu
Editor-in-Chief

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YOLK™ always welcomes new products, films, music, etc. for review. Please contact us at the address above for consideration.

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Wax On, Wax Off Poetic

Some of this issue's letters come off as subconscious auditions to write for us—there's just something tantalizing about seeing your words in print, isn't there? Send shameless love letters and good curry recipes to Yakkity Yolk, P.O. Box 3607, Alhambra, CA 91803-0607 or e-mail them to editor@yolk.com (be sure to tell us where you're from). We reserve the right to edit your letter's content, to possibly make you sound more intelligent than you actually are.

Who's Karen Kim?

I must admit, I didn't know who the hell Karen Kim ["The Raw & The Real," 2001 Issue No.4] was before I read about her in YOLK. X.D. Lim's interview was actually a pretty good read. She's cute, too. Thanks, YOLK.

Will

Chicago, Via e-mail

By the way, for those of you wondering what "X.D." stands for, it's Xenophobic Dumping.

Lots of advice

The thing I appreciate the most about YOLK is that you guys have decided to publish a magazine that caters to a very difficult audience...Asian Americans. We as Asian Americans are very diverse in our backgrounds. On a day to day basis, we deal with language, cultural, and stereotypical barriers. I understand that YOLK is a relatively young magazine and it will take time to work all the minor details out...but as a reader, I feel the writing in YOLK is the weakest link. I noticed that many of the major articles were written by a small group of individuals. It is important to develop a strong editorial staff to make this magazine a major force in the Asian American community. But I've started to think more and more about how this magazine can



become a long term success. Clearly, there isn't much competition...I think there's only one other magazine in this market [There's another one? Really?—YY]. The biggest challenge comes from the readers themselves. Keep up the good work.

Craig

Via e-mail

Thanks for the advice, Craig. Now tell us something we don't know.

Pride?

I remember when YOLK featured clever magazine covers

with intriguing celebrities that gave us a tremendous sense of pride. YOLK seemed to stand for something, then. Now, though, I notice that all the recent covers feature barely-clad "Asian chicks with hot bodies" (as many uninformed Non-Asians would describe). What's up with that? I know sex sells, but do you have to keep selling "China Dolls" to the rest of the world? Make us proud again, YOLK.

Wax On Wax Off

Via YOLK's Guestbook

Calling yourself "Wax On Wax Off" doesn't exactly make me proud as an Asian, either.

Romance is dead

I've been reading the "Yin & Yolk" columns every issue this year, and I've come to the obvious conclusion that romance is dead.

Debbie

Via e-mail

Either that, or you just need to get laid.

Strange, Round 2

I am writing in response to the comment by Steve of Boston that "Asian Americans from California (are) so strange." (Speaking for some of us Asian American men living in the state, the strange behavior? That's the sound of our souls crying out. I live in a situation in which I cannot

be myself. I find my true self torn between the many expectations, many forms of ignorance and plain naivete of society.

(Without) knowing exactly what Steve meant by saying Asian-Americans here are strange, I can only answer in rather general terms and ideas. I am caught between whether I must act White, Black or Asian. I act out all three personas at varying times in life. Sometimes I simultaneously act out more than one. The more I learn about life, the more confused I become. The more I think I understand, the more I think I have the answer, the more complicated life seems.

In searching to find who I really am and where, as an Asian-American, my place is in society, the craziness, the nuttiness, the outspokenness, the sly, witty jokes help take the edge off in a crazy and, at times, depressing world that in a blink of an eye, in the guise of a joke, or in a barbed wire insult spoken softly, yet in a steely fashion, can show you that you're not welcome to all society may offer and that you are indeed different, not one and the same and not a "real" American.

Krouching Taiga

California, via e-mail

Whoa...now, that was deep!

SINGING TO THE TOP

Sandra Allen

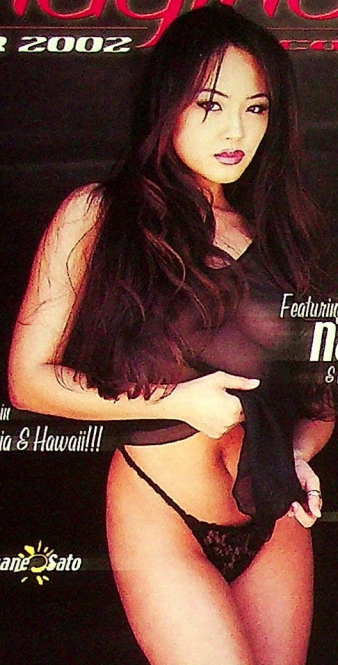
Now part of a dream cast that includes Lea Salonga and Jennifer Paz in the country's first major revival of the classic Rodgers & Hammerstein's musical "Flower Drum Song," Sandra is no stranger to sharing the stage with top-notch talent. Her theater debut was opposite the venerable Glenn Close in "Sunset Blvd." The half-Chinese performer has also lent her vocal talents as a back-up singer for Vanessa L. Williams and Spanish pop sensation Luis Miguel.

With such impressive credits to her still burgeoning career, it is only a matter of time before we see Sandra's name and face as headliner in TV and film.—Alex Luu

Photographer: Dennis Mukai; stylist: Naama Givoni; make-up/hair: Shiyena Chun; shirt by Jooni Joolz (Fred Segal Fun, Santa Monica); pants by Varga (Sharon Segal).



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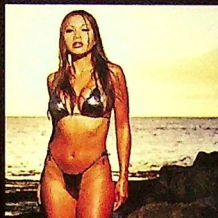


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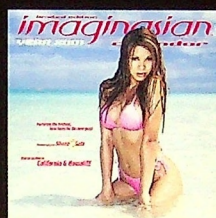
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Real World: L.A.

By DANIELLE NAGAMI

You're 22. You just graduated from whatever college your parents made you attend. You've been in a dating dry spell for the last six months. What the hell do you do now? In the Los Angeles area there are approximately 2 million single people (OK, I made up that figure) living within a 30-mile radius. This isn't like college where you can stroll into the food court expecting to see the same cute guy or girl, sitting at their usual table with *boba* in hand. No, sir. This is the REAL WORLD (however that is defined in LA), where you are left to fend for yourself in the vicious City of Angels.

My question is: Why is it that in a city so large, I feel as though I attract all the WEIRDOS? You know, those odd men that stare and say randomly unintelligent things? In addition, it's at the most awkward, unromantic places where I run into these people (and they ask the cheesiest questions, too). Guys—if you're going to approach a woman, please think first about what comes out of your mouth. For example, a couple of weeks ago on my usual way to work I stopped by the local AM/PM, grabbed a cup of coffee and jumped to the end of the line. The guy in front of me turns back and tosses me a glance,



turns around, looks back again and asks, "So, how's the coffee here?"

"It's OK, I guess."

Uncomfortable pause.

What I wanted to say, "Well, for an AM/PM mini-mart, how do you *think* the coffee would be?"

His reply to my reluctant and short answer: "So what are you doing today?"

"Going to work." Pause again.

What I wanted to say, "It's 9:00 in the morning and I'm getting coffee. Wanna take a guess?"

When was this mindless torture going to end? Finally he paid, tossed me a cheesy smirk and proceeded to his car to pump his gas. Could it

be? My Prince Charming, right here in the check-out line of the ARCO gas station? Please, I don't think so. Pump your gas and go.

Not even a week later, I run into the post office to deliver some packages. I had one of those large canvas bins filled with Priority Mail boxes, so this guy runs ahead of me to open the door. That's nice. I say, "Thank you."

"You're welcome." He's staring. Staring. Staring.

"So, what are you doing here?" he finally says.

"Hmmm," I thought. "I'm at the post office with a bin full of packages, wanna take a guess?" But again, I held back.

"Just sending out some

mail," I replied, waiting for the line to shorten.

"Huh...huh...oh yeah. That's a lot of mail," he said with a goofy grin, peering toward my cart (as if he didn't see me run in with it). We made some small talk, which quickly resulted in silence. I was just trying to make my delivery at the post office. I wanted to say, "Why don't you wait until you have something sensible to say before you make a total ass out of yourself?"...But I didn't.

Now, I understand that there is a limited number of places that men think of to try to pick up on women, but if it's at the most mundane places, make sure that whatever is said is intelligent, clever at least. There is only so much time in a day, especially if you work in LA or any other metropolitan area. Why waste that precious time making comments that will only make you look like a jackass? Remember, women appreciate men that are intelligent, and who assume the same about the woman. If you try to pick up on someone and you're not at the Viper Room or Miyagi's (on Sunset Boulevard on a Saturday night), make sure your opening line makes a positive impression, because if the girl's not drunk you probably won't get her digits. ♡

Where Do We Go Now?

By DAVID NGO

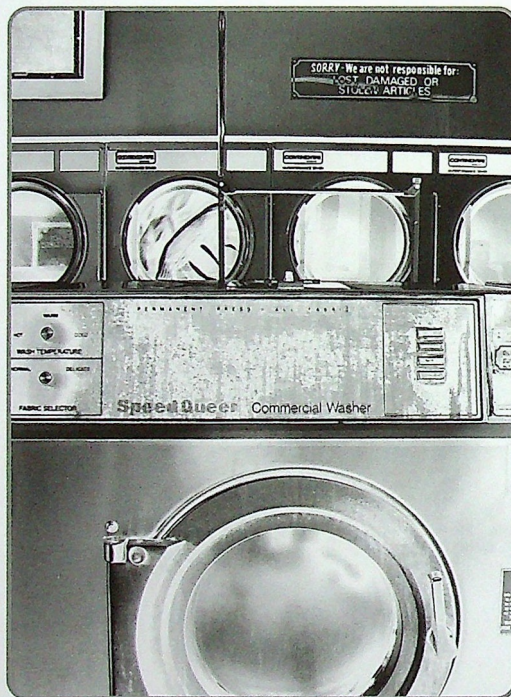
Nobody likes you when you're 23. Blink 182, I agree with you.

The real world does not have much sympathy for an early 20-something single professional male. He is at the bottom rung of a very high corporate ladder. His paltry paycheck is spent on rent, student loans, car payments, bills, and not much else. All his college friends are scattered far away. His toughest struggle is finding a place to meet chicks.

I've graduated from college, so I no longer have access to the numerous young co-eds that frequent apartment parties, classes, or dorms. Girls at work are actually women in their late 20's and early 30's who are looking for husbands. There are girls who patronize bars and clubs, but that whole scene is getting old.

That leaves me with a few but crucial locations where I could at least manage some simple interaction with the opposite sex. Laugh if you must, but the following is a list of "hangouts" that I've found myself frequenting:

LAUNDROMATS Girls have a lot of clothes, so they usually do many loads of laundry. In addition, most people watch over their laundry because of



the fear of theft. As a result, the laundromat provides a captive audience of girls that will remain there for an extended period of time. **DMV** The Department of Motor Vehicles provides time and captivity. It is natural for people to bond after standing in line for six hours only to find out that they were standing in the wrong line. Once you

see a cute girl, stand in line beside her and use time and a mutual hatred of the DMV to your advantage.

BANK Be there on the 15th and end of every month. Girls are usually in a good mood when they're cashing their paychecks.

And then there's the elevator. That's right. The elevator. I saw an opportunity one

Monday morning as I was entering my apartment elevator. Dressed in form-flattering business attire, this cute girl had a vibrant smile that could solve the California energy crisis. The elevator was headed three flights down to the garage, so I knew that I had to make my move fast. After returning her vivacious smile with a lackluster grin, I asked her, "So are you going to work?" Looking down at her workbag, she replied, "Yes." At that point, I should have saved myself by saying something like, "That's what I figured because you've got my mind working overtime!"

Instead I said, "Oh, okay." The conversation killer of all time.

The elevator door opened and we went our separate ways.

After several more pathetic incidents, I've come full circle to the realization that nobody truly likes you when you're 23. Every place, conventional and unconventional, is not a good place for someone like me to meet girls because there is always something that screws things up. Noting this, there are only three things I can do to solve my dating woes—join a monastery, wait until I'm 28 and let a woman's biological clock work to my advantage. ♥



ALL IN THE FAMILY

One Voice

CURRENT GIG The Filipino American R&B group recently released their sophomore album *Sincerely Yours*, a follow up to their successful debut CD *Just The Beginning*. Monica Castillo, Melissa Ruiz, and Marie and Mae Ceralvo bring a rich history of family and musical influences to their distinct sound. Since their breakout single hit "When U Think About Me," One Voice has been blazing through college and festival circuits. **BACKGROUND** The girls sang in the same choir while at St. Patrick Vincent high school in Vallejo, California. Marie: "During recess we just got together and sang and irritated our friends! One person would start and another would join in." Unbeknownst to them, a friend secretly signed them up for a talent show. With only one night to rehearse, the quartet went on to take the top prize and from then on realized they had something special to offer. **ORIGIN OF NAME** Mae: "We were doing this wedding anniversary and someone said, 'When you all sing together, you sound like one voice!'" **BIG BREAK IN THE BIZ** After a show at UC Davis, Kurtis Kato from indie label Kamikaze Records approached them and expressed interest in representation and a record deal. Monica: "A lot of people approached us and gave us their phone numbers or business cards. Kurtis was different in that he actually kept in touch with us and slowly built

a friendship and trust with us. A year later, we were ready to take it to the next level." That next level resulted in the recording of the phenomenal hit "When U Think About Me" and signing on with Kamikaze/MCA Records.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN BREAKING RACIAL BARRIERS On a past tour with Destiny's Child, Ja Rule, Eve, and Busta Rhymes in Texas, the girls got up close and personal with the ugly reality of racism when bottle caps were hurled onto the stage during their set. "We were the only non-Black act on the bill and the audience was looking at us like, 'What are these Filipino girls doing up there?'" We sang a couple of songs and they had no idea who we were. Then for the closing number we performed "When U Think About Me" and you could see all these jaws drop open in shock and confusion. We always have people who like us and people who don't. We're still trying to overcome the color barrier. There's a lot of politics in the songs that we sing." **LIKES & DISLIKES GOING ON TOUR** All four unanimously agree the best thing about being on the road is "seeing new fans and places," while the cons are "the red eye flights and the stopovers." **PRE-CONCERT RITUAL** "We always get together and have a prayer and a cheer before every show." —Alex Luu

Photographer: Dwayne Ingels; make-up: Amy Hernandez; hair: Tony Zetser; stylist: Elie Naim

JAPANESE OUTLAW MASTERS 3 & HONG KONG NEON FILM FESTS

Outlaws In Neon

Asian cinema has garnered such meteoric attention and acclaim in the past 10 years that one needs to look no further than their local movie house or film school nowadays for the latest festivals and retrospectives of certain Eastern auteurs. This October brings two impressive Asian film festivals to Los Angeles. The American Cinematheque hosts **Japanese Outlaw Masters 3: The New Generation** at the Egyptian Theatre while across town a batch of new Hong Kong films hit the screen under UCLA Film Archives' **Hong Kong Neon Festival**.

The American Cinematheque has been a major force in bringing alternative cinema to hungry fans for more than a decade now. Its illustrious history includes spotlights and retrospectives on the underrated Japanese filmmaker Hideo Gosha (*Goyokin, The Wolves*), maverick Beat Takeshi, and more recently a series on veteran filmmaker Kinji Fukusaku (*Battle Royale*). In addition to bringing rare and unseen foreign films to the forefront, the American Cinematheque has also been responsible for some of LA's most ambitious widescreen festivals of restored prints of Hollywood classics such as *Ben-Hur*, *The Ten Commandments*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and *Blade Runner*.

Fresh from the previous two Japanese Outlaw Masters series in 1997 and 1999, the 2001 Japanese Outlaw Masters 3 festival kicks off with the shocking Takashi Miike film *Audition*. Ryo Ishibashi plays a lonely widower who gets more than

he bargains for when he reluctantly decides to hold "auditions" for a new girlfriend. What follows is a progressive descent into stomach-churning horror as a gorgeous woman (Eihi Shiina) fills the part of both girlfriend and tormentor. Also included in the festival are three other Miike films: *Dead or Alive*, *The Guys From Paradise*, and *The City Of Lost Souls*. At once brutal and exhilarating, *Dead or Alive* is a kinetic ride through Japan's sex clubs, underground Yakuza hide-



outs, and neon streets where an unrelenting cop (Sho Aikawa) matches wits and fists with a ruthless gangster (Riki Takeuchi). Sure to shock and provoke, this 1999 film has been compared to John Woo's classics *A Better Tomorrow* series, though the violence is more over-the-top. *City Of Lost Souls* and *The Guys From Paradise* are just as visceral, cementing Miike as one of Japan's brightest and most controversial directors. Japanese Outlaw Masters 3 also boasts three films (*Tokyo Fist*, *Bullet Ballet*, *Gemini*) by director Shinya Tsukamoto, best known for his manga-influenced



Tokyo Fist. Other films in this stupendous series include two by Beat Takeshi (*Kids Return* and *Scene At The Sea*), *Freeze Me*, *Gonin 2*, *The Fire Within* and more.

Gathering top-notch filmmakers as well as securing important films that usually go on to win multiple



awards, the UCLA Film Archives has been consistent and adventurous in its programming over the years. The Hong Kong Neon Festival promises to be one of its best mini-festivals that focuses on the state of Hong Kong cinema after luminaries such as John Woo, Jackie Chan, and Chow Yun Fat have made the transcontinental leap to Hollywood.

One of the films to rejuvenate Hong Kong cinema is Benny Chan's *Gen-X Cops*, which opens the festival. Much like Leslie Cheung and Chow Yun Fat who heralded the golden age of HK cinema with Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* a decade and a

half ago, pop sensation Nicholas Tse and heartthrob Daniel Wu offer up a hip, irreverent, and witty take on the action genre. Chan fuses this cinematic treat with large doses of wicked humor, making *Cops*' young stars at once humanistic and dangerous. The festival also includes numerous US and West Coast premieres. Lawrence Ah Mon's *Spacked Out* and Aubrey Lam's *Twelve Nights* focus on the often wondrous yet fragile experiences of Hong Kong's youth. *Spacked Out* charts the dizzying days and nights of four displaced teenage girls as they struggle with sexuality, drugs, and friendship, while *Twelve Nights* delivers meticulous and rapturous images from 12 separate episodes in the love life of a young couple (Cecilia Cheung and Eason Chan).

These new faces and voices are contrasted by one of HK cinema's veterans Ringo Lam, whose 1999 thriller *Victim* makes its US premiere here at the festival. A no-holds-barred banquet of bullets, suspense, and old-fashioned ghost story, this Lau Chin-Wan starrer is a must viewing for the uninitiated. Other films in the festival include *Expect The Unexpected*, *Gege*, and Stanley Kwan's new drama *Lan Yu*.

For more info on American Cinematheque and UCLA Film Archives programming, go to www.egyptiantheatre.com and www.cinema.ucla.edu.—Alex Liu

Photos courtesy of American Cinematheque and UCLA Film Archives



MERCEDES SL 55 AMG

Why Med School May Not Be Such A Bad Idea

The 2002 AMG edition of the fifth-generation Mercedes-Benz SL series is the ultimate roadster. This supercharged 5.5 liter V8 (476hp!) beast tops out at 250mph, and goes 0-60 in under five seconds (11 seconds less than the time it takes to open the "vario-roof"). Take one home for about \$113,000. Or, buy a home instead.—DJ Fillbuster



Guy Aoki

AOKI VS. SILVERMAN I'd Rather Be A Douchebag...

In the West corner, comedienne Sarah "I wish I was Janeane Garofalo" Silverman. In the East corner, Guy "Fists of Fury" Aoki of Media Action Network for Asian Americans. Last August 22, Silverman and Aoki squared off on Bill Maher's "Politically Incorrect." Aoki has publicly denounced Silverman for using the word "Chink" in a joke during her July 11th appearance on the "Conan O'Brien Show" and used this forum to retaliate. Aoki got into the action quick by repeatedly attacking Silverman for using that hateful slur. Aoki used every opportunity to punish Silverman, even suggesting that her joke was not funny. Silverman went off and swung back with her ever-so-witty jab, "You're a douchebag, man!" and "There's only two Asians I don't like and you're one of 'em!" If Aoki had any sense of humor, he would have retorted with, "That's a step-up. At least a douchebag is welcomed in his own neighborhood." The fight was a draw. A rematch is yet to be announced. —Oanh Ly



Sarah Silverman

Photos ©ABC, Inc.

CARTOON NETWORK

Representoons

New to Cartoon Network's line-up is "Samurai Jack," a dazzling, highly stylized animated series by Genndy Tartakovsky. The show follows the adventures of Jack (voiced by Phil Lamarr), a samurai warrior from the past who was banished into the future by Aku, an evil shape-shifting wizard. Check your local listings, as they say.

Online, CartoonNetwork.com's Web Premiere Toons includes an exclusive animated (duh) video for a certain magazine editor-in-chief's favorite girl group (okay, mine too). Eden's Crush's

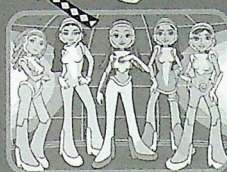


Johnny Bravo



Hong Kong Phooey

Samurai Jack



Eden's Crush

C'mon, kids, it's a cartoon for heaven's sake!

Also online is Andy Lau's updated take on "Hong Kong Phooey," looking buffed-out in a dreamlike all-out battle against bizarre-looking monsters. Plus, don't miss the wacky "interactive" episode of that loveable big dumb guy, "Johnny Bravo" (created by Filipino American cartoonist Van Partible).

—Ellen Nguyen

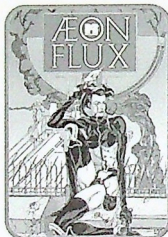
"Love This Way" is visually interpreted as a campy-but-cute sci-fi adventure where the girls spread love and happiness on a desolate planet of bickering monsters.

Photos ©Cartoon Network

ANIMATORS PETER CHUNG, JOHN ENG, & ARNE WONG

Animation Superstars

With the dawning of the new millennium, Hollywood has finally embraced Asian American actors, directors, and—our very own animators! At the forefront are three artists: Peter Chung, best known for creating the savage and surreal MTV series, "Aeon Flux," John Eng, who was Sequence Director on the highly successful feature, *Rugrats In Paris*, and Arne Wong, who collaborated with James Cameron on the "Terminator 2 3-D" attraction at Universal Studios. Recently, United Asian Artists Network (UAAN) invited these three accomplished artists as guest speakers on a panel focusing on the state of animation and visual arts. At a packed room in Pasadena's Pacific Asia Museum, Chung, Eng, and Wong discussed the vagaries of an animation career and shared their many set-backs and achievements with the audience. At the close of the evening, attendees were treated to an animation screening of an extreme variety, which included Chung's vision of Cindy Crawford as a sci-fi femme fatale, Eng's medieval-themed short film "Galen and Kalibron," and Wong's psychedelic commercial for "Acapulco Gold" (marijuana). Alternately brash, nostalgic, and sexy, the work of these three creative leaders are sure to inspire, entertain, and titillate future generations for years to come. —Cynthia Quimpo Ignacio



Arne Wong

ROASTED CRAB SNACK

Got Crabs?

I was thoroughly shocked when I walked into the Asian snack foods aisle at my neighborhood Japanese market and saw "Roasted Crab" on the shelf next to the dried cuttle fish. Yuck! They looked like the small dirty crabs you find on cliff rocks. Only, these had sesame seeds all over them. And yes, most of us at YOLK World HQ tasted the creepy crustaceans. With the texture of eggshells and stink of old moldy fish, I was rather turned off by the musky flavor as I tried to pick the grit out of my molars. I wouldn't recommend them unless they're chased by an Asahi or a thorough tooth-brushing. —Danielle Nagami



NEW YORK KOREAN FILM FESTIVAL 2001

Seoul Flicks

New York film buffs and connoisseurs were treated to the first ever major Korean Film Festival August 17-26 at the Anthology Film Archives in Manhattan. Coordinated and sponsored by Subway Cinema, the Korean Film Forum and Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd., When Korean Cinema Attacks! New York Film Festival 2001 was an ambitious event, solely based on the number and types of films screened. The



Attack the Gas Station

blockbuster *Joint Security Area*. Sparking political protests when it was first shown in its native land, *Joint* focuses on tragedy of human expendability during the Korean War. Perhaps the most daring film in the festival is a gentle story of love between two lesbian schoolgirls called *Memento Mori*. There's definitely enough forbidden kisses, fondling, and sex in the film to warrant an NC-17 rating, but what stands out is the poignancy of the characters and their yearnings for a "normal" life. For more information on future festivals, log onto www.subwaycinema.com. —Alex Luu



Memento Mori

opening night film *Tell Me Something* is a twisted yet lyrical thriller in the tradition of Alfred Hitchcock with a little bit of early Roman Polanski thrown in for good measure. Two of Korean cinema's brightest new stars, Han Suk-Kyu and Shim Eun-Ha are two desperate souls lost in a rain-drenched world of blood, deceit, and horror. Director Chang Yoon-Hyun was also on hand to field questions from a sold-out crowd. Other highlights in this landmark festival included the languid yet sumptuous *Christmas in*



Joint Security Area



Foul King

August (also starring the leads from *Tell Me*), the disturbing horror hit *The Isle*, the frenetic *Barking Dogs Never Bite*, *Foul King* about the zany world of underground wrestling, and Korea's most recent controversial



The Isle

Dim Sum

► The latest **Bruce Lee** documentary, *A Warrior's Journey* (featuring several minutes of unreleased *Game Of Death* footage), should be out on DVD everywhere by the time you read this. Everywhere except here in the US, where it's tied up in a legal dispute between daughter **Shannon** (who's in charge of her dad's estate) and Warner Brothers (who was going to release it). Sadly, don't hold your breath.



► Palm OS PDA owners can download a free game based on **Jet Li's** *The One* from spe.sony.com/movies/theone/. The game is available in both grayscale and color versions. ► Fresh from his experimental *The Center of the World*, **Wayne Wang's** next project will likely be directing **Jennifer Lopez** in *The Chambermaid*. Originally slated for director **John Hughes** with Oscar winner **Hilary Swank** in the lead, the romantic comedy is about a maid who meets a dashing British gent while working at a luxury hotel.

► Catch **John Cho** on the small screen this fall co-starring in the new sitcom "Off



Centre," airing Sundays on the WB Network.

► Director **Chen Kaige's** (*Farewell My Concubine*) highly anticipated American film debut, the erotic thriller *Killing Me Softly* starring **Heather Graham**, has been re-scheduled for an early Spring 2002 release.

©2001 Sony Pictures Digital Entertainment

Photo ©WB Television Network

NINTENDO GAMECUBE DEBUT PARTY

Cube Is Game

Nintendo threw an exclusive and lavish party (sponsored by MTV) in Hollywood to debut their new GameCube, complete with a red carpet and paparazzi. Games such as *Luigi's Castle* and *Star Wars Rogue Squadron 2* were showcased on beautiful Panasonic HDTVs, as DJs spun, and hors d'oeuvres and booze kept on coming. Several celebrity appearances by the likes of Shannon Elizabeth, Orlando Jones, and Will Yun Lee provided starpower for the event. Want a GameCube (\$199)? Get in line November 18. More info: Nintendo.com (but you knew that). —Max Medina



Photos courtesy of Subway Cinema

Photo by The Mystery Parade

Samurai Spawn

McFarlane

Born from McFarlane's "Dark Ages" collection, the Samurai Spawn series contains six figures featuring devastating detail and over 15 points of articulation.

Warrior Takeda (circa 1185) vows vengeance with his final breath after being assassinated by feudal lords for being a brash Samurai. Thus, Samurai Spawn is born from the pits of darkness with a mission to cleanse the land of Samurai warriors who are not pure of heart while searching for his own salvation.

Available in this series are Samurai Spawn, Dojo (his assistant), Jyaku the Nightmare (the three-headed beast), the sexy (but deadly) Lotus Angel Warrior, Scorpion Assassin and Jackal Assassin. For more details on this epic quest, log onto Spawn.com. While you're there, you may want to join their club, as this series offers additional member-exclusive accessories. —*Slm*



From left: Dojo, Lotus Angel Warrior, and Samurai Spawn. Oooh, scaaaary...

AIBO LM Series

Sony Electronics Entertainment Robot America

Introduced in 1999, the original AIBO (Artificial Intelligence roBOT—yeah, it's a dumb acronym) sold out of its initial U.S. run of 2,000 in just four days. Now meet the newest AIBOs, "Latte" and "Macaroni" (ERS-311/312, \$850 each), friendlier-looking versions of the popular fake dog. These pups can take photos (can your dog do that?), and feature a 75-word vocabulary (they'll even respond to whatever name you christen them with), in addition to the touch sensors built into their heads and paws. Bonus: they won't crap on your furniture. Website: us.aibo.com. —*MM*



Latte (left) and Macaroni. No, they can't play poker. Not yet, anyway.



Airgo

Razor USA

Now that practically every kid on the block has a Razor kick scooter (or a cheap facsimile), the much-mitigated company is spearheading a pogo stick revival with the Airgo (\$79.99). Maybe this time, Razor will take steps to protect their property. Website: RazorUSA.com.

—*DJ Filibuster*

Yoshi 442

Dragon Models Ltd.

"Go For Broke" again with Yoshi. This 12" action figure is a dashing young WWII infantry soldier neatly outfitted with gear issued during the 1940's. Well detailed, the M1 Garand rifle allows you to charge the sliding lever and mount the bayonet on the barrel. Additionally, two pineapple grenades, a shovel and a two-piece helmet complete the set. For more on the 442 combat team and these action figures, contact the Japanese American National Museum gift shop at janm.com. —*S*



Japanese Hot Wheels

Mattel/Bandai

In Japan, Mattel has licensed a number of TV classics such as the Mach 5 from "Speed Racer," Machine Sherlock from "Ultraman," and the Machine Tornado from "Masked Rider." Those who know Japanese pop culture will enjoy these replicas. Also in this series is the *Back To The Future* De Lorean, licensed from Universal Studios.

Here in the US, this series is only available in specialty shops. Go, Speed Racer, Go! —*S*



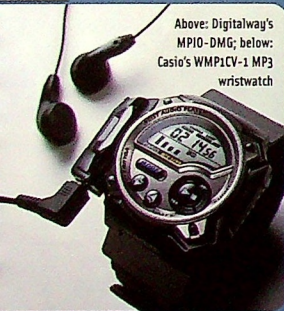


VERSATILE MP3 PLAYERS

Double-Duty Gadgets

Now it's even more convenient to take your MP3s with you. From Korea comes the feature-packed Digitalway MP10-DMG. It has up to 128MBs of internal storage (expandable via Smart Media cards), plays WMA audio, records, has a multi-lingual LCD display, and an optional digital camera attachment (no

Above: Digitalway's MP10-DMG; below: Casio's WMP1CV-1 MP3 wristwatch



kitchen sink here). Just one AA battery provides a generous 20 hours of power.

Casio's WMP1CV-1 wrist-watch stores between 33 and 66 minutes worth of music (depending on the quality settings). It features an equalizer to fine-tune your music's sound, goofy editable animated icons, and the head-phone jack is detachable when you're not using the watch as an MP3 player.

Websites: Digitalway.co.kr and Casio.com—DJ Filibuster

MOTOROLA V100 COMMUNICATOR Cute And Effective

The V100 (\$199.99) offers text messaging, Internet access, AOL Instant Messenger, and voice recording. It's a phone, too! Website: Motorola.com—DJF



SONY DAV-C900 DREAM SYSTEM

Instant Home Theater

Sony's DAV-C900 (\$1,000) is the top-of-the-line model of their DVD Dream Systems. In addition to DVDs and CDs, it is also compatible with SACDs (music albums remixed into 5.1 surround sound). With enough power to piss off your neighbors (450 watts), component audio outputs, and super-stylish speakers (the stands double as acoustic chambers), this setup truly is a dream.—DJF



DVD RECORDERS

The Videotape Killers

Is videotape dead? Not yet, but chances are DVD will completely replace those cumbersome tapes in the not-too-distant future. Helping bury the VCR is Pioneer's DVR-7000 (\$2,800), which records on both DVD-RW and DVD-R discs. It also has high-quality progressive scan playback, VCR+ (how long before that's changed to "DVR+"), and variable degrees of picture quality settings.



Above: Panasonic's VDR-M10; left: Pioneer's DVR-7000

Panasonic's VDR-M10 Palmcorder (\$2,499) has a 1.1 megapixel CCD for high-resolution video, 12x (48x digital) zoom, and records up to two hours of video onto 3" 2.8GB DVD-RAM cartridges. Familiar standard camcorder features include auto exposure and image stabilization.

Websites: PioneerElectronics.com and Panasonic.com—Ellen Nguyen

DADA FOOTWEAR

The Force Is With You

With its striking design, the SoleSonicForce (\$120) is Dada Footwear's latest entry into the running shoe arena, featuring "Draulics"—their unique system of linear hydraulic shock absorbers. The innovative cushioning technology lowers impact with high energy absorption.

When you're done running around in your SoleSonicForces, check out the Foot Soldier (\$75), a clean and classic casual boot.

Website: DadaFootwear.com.—DJF



Above: the SoleSonicForce; left: the Foot Soldier



REX NAVARRETE

Go Pack Yourself

San Francisco-based comedian Rex Navarrete has gone the "do it yourself" route by launching Kakarabaw Productions to release his third album, *Bastos* ("crude" in Tagalog). Navarrete's brand of comedy is a hilarious exploration of the Filipino American lifestyle, including a droll take on the Filipino accent (*pack* sounding like *fuck*). Check out his website, RexNavarrete.com, for more. —Max Medina



Photos by The Mystery Parade

ASIAN AMERICAN ACTIVISTS SPEAK UP ON WAR & ACTIVISM

What Now?

On September 29th, The UCLA Asian Studies Center hosted a one-day Teach-In/Book Signing event commemorating activism in the Asian American community and the publication of *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*. Spanning more than three decades of Asian American activism, the anthology is edited by former anti-war activist Steve Louie and labor-activist and Associate Editor of *Amerasia Journal* Glenn Omatsu. Naturally, the focus of the historic teach-in event turned to activism in today's political climate. What can Asian American activists and students do about America's looming war in the Middle East and how can we learn from it?

A panel of seasoned Asian American activists addressed a room full of college students of diverse ethnicity, all hoping to get a sense of resolve or direction from their leaders. Ryan Yukota, of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center insisted that now more than ever was the time for the Asian American community to unite and give special support to South Asians and Middle Easterners. The recent hate crimes committed by vigilantes in retaliation against the September 11th tragedy have resulted in harass-

ment and even the deaths of people of Middle-Eastern appearance. The question quickly turned to America's wartime response. Should we attack the perpetrators of the terrorist acts against America? Brenda Paik Sunoo, author of *Moment, Stay Awhile* went back to her journalism roots and stressed using words as a skill and a powerful uniter. "Youth is our protagonist. Compassion,

and Mr. Bush. As citizens of the world, we have to examine why others hate Americans so much."

As the day progressed and as the complexity of the current political climate revealed itself, the speakers and participants had more questions than definitive answers. Little Tokyo icon Mo Nishida asked a resounding question, "The technology today is that we can feed, house, clothe, employ, and provide health care and insurance for everyone in the world. Why the hell isn't this happening?"



humility, and responsibility will help us through these hard times."

Marilyn Hamano Quon, former Black Panther activist, said, "We need to see ourselves not as citizens of America but as citizens of the world. We fly our flags because we are mourning the deaths of the thousands of people at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and outside of Pittsburgh, not because we're supporting our government

In addition to notable speakers, the historic Teach-In/Book Signing event also included a landmark reunion concert by Grain of Sand with original members Nobuko Miyamoto, Charlie Chin, and Chris Ijima. Other cultural offerings included a film *Manongs: Tenants of the I-Hotel* by filmmaker Curtis Choy and performances by Eleanor Academia and the World Kulingtang group. —Danh Ly

Photo by Tom Nguyen

SWORD MISTRESSES THRILL AT HIGHLANDER CONVENTION

Cut You Up!

Elizabeth Gracen and Roberta Brown, stunningly beautiful as well as fierce, are actresses who are also accomplished combat choreographers. In a field mostly dominated by men, these beauties have impressive credits on the big and small screen. Brown recently doubled for Lucy Liu in the box office hit *Charlie's Angels* and Gracen had her own spin-off series from "Highlander" called "Raven." Both women have also appeared on the cable series "The Queen of Swords." At a recent "Highlander" reunion convention, Gracen and Brown



Elizabeth Gracen leads a fan-as-weapon demonstration

demonstrated a fighting form utilizing a fan as a weapon. The class was immediately sold-out, as well as the two extra classes that had to be added to the schedule. The duo, who provided the class members with flower-like red and yellow fans to practice with, credit martial arts master Helen Wu for developing the elegant, dance-like form. However, don't be fooled for long—at the seminar, Brown repeated some of the moves at triple-speed, while



Roberta Brown (center) and Elizabeth Gracen (right) pose with a convention attendee

wielding a metal-spined fan. The loud SNAP that the bladed-fan made sounded like a gunshot, and a forward thrust with it could easily cut open a throat! When it comes to flashing a killer smile and an even deadlier par and thrust of swords, others are no match for this "lovely pair." —Cynthia Quimpo Ignacio

MANIPULATED SOUNDS SEMINAR

Fingers Do The Talking

More like an all-star scratch DJ showcase, last September's Manipulated Sounds Seminar at L.A.'s El Rey Theater also doubled as the last show of key-boardist Money Mark's recent national tour.

The enthusiastic crowd got fired up by the likes of turntablist DJs Nando (of Top Rawmen), Kidragon, and P-Trix, while QBert's groundbreaking animated film, *Wave*, screened between DJs.

Sporting a new short(er)-haired look, Cut Chemist took the stage ("HairCut Chemist," anyone?) and performed his set on a pair of unusual CD "turntables," likely irking a handful of horrified strictly-vinyl purists.

QBert then came out hobbling on crutches, suffering from a hip pointer ("same as Bo Jackson," he said), and "apologized" for not having a set routine. Nevertheless, he proceeded to whip the crowd into a frenzy with a mind-boggling freestyle performance that probably led some to suspect he had his arms replaced with bionic ones. Others simply waved their arms in profound approval. Further improvising, QBert treated the crowd to his classic "Rock The Bells." All that on a bum leg, leaving no doubt he's still the greatest.

Next up was one of Canada's finest imports, Kid Koala, who settled things

down with a laid-back "song" that brought out Money Mark and his band. Koala stayed on to scratch, as the set began with Mark "playing" a delay-rigged amp's feedback with a mic. "Now, we're gonna kick your ass," he warned. And they did, as the band continued with a wicked set that included Mark's strange antics of banging on a gong, and playing a trumpet with a deflating balloon.

Mid-set, the spotlight was once again on a solo Kid Koala, who busted out his signature "Drunk Trumpet." The band then reconvened and started a jaw-

dropping jam that lasted several minutes, during which QBert joined Kid Koala on the turntables, while Cut Chemist took over the drum kit (and later, the bongos), ending with Mark taking the drumming while playing "Smoke On The Water" on a kazoo-like Maestro Voice Box. The band closed with a track from Mark's recent album, *Change Is Coming* [see review, page 55], as the imposing turntable-pyromaniac DJ Swamp (best known as Beck's former resident DJ) ended the evening.

Overall, the evening was packed with consistently solid performances. Notably, the bulk of the talent just happened to be Asian American, performing to a remarkably diverse audience. Imagine that.—Max Medina



Nando and Kidragon



DJ P-Trix



Cut Chemist



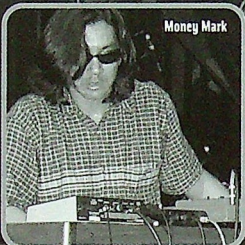
DJ Swamp



DJ QBert



Kid Koala



Money Mark

Photo by The Mystery Parade

2ND ANNUAL SAN DIEGO ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Bigger And Better

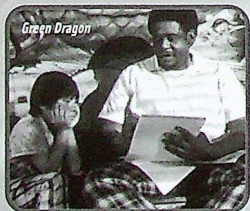
Last September, the San Diego Asian Film Festival (SDAFF) was going strong for its second year. More than 7,000 film fans attended over 100 features and shorts, in addition to workshops and parties (we're talking San Diego, after all).

"The SDAFF was proud to bring Asian American films into San Diego and celebrate those artists that would otherwise never be recognized," noted Lee Ann Kim, the festival's executive director.

Opening the festival was *American Chai*, filmmaker Anurag Mehta's coming-of-age story of an Indian American college student, with a familiar parent-defying theme that most of us can relate to.

Korean films from both sides of

the globe included John H. Lee's *The Cut Runs Deep*, which explores the downward spiral of a half-Korean teen who joins an NYC Korean street



Green Dragon

gang, while the South Korean import, *Shiri*, is a reunification-themed political thriller.

American Adobo, a New York-based production by A-list Filipino director Laurice Guillen, is a look at a group of friends struggling with

their individual demons. The film screened to a lively sold-out crowd.

Rod Pulido's *The Flip Side* and Abraham Lim's *Roads And Bridges* both continued their successful fes-



Shiri



American Chai

tival run, while Jimmy Lee's *Close Call* made its world premiere.

A Gala Awards dinner was also held, hosted by this issue's cover

girl, Michelle Krusiec, and *Pavilion Of Women* co-star John Cho. Other stars in attendance included Philip Rhee, Marie Matiko, Rick Yune, and Hiep Thi Le, whose film *Green Dragon* (co-starring Don Duong, Forest Whitaker, and Patrick Swayze) closed the festival.

Among those receiving awards were Teo Carlo Pulgar's *Staccato Fugue* (Best Experimental), Helder K. Sun's *Lint People* (Best Animation), Johanna Lee's *Bitter And Sweet* (Best Short Documentary), Karen Lee's *Made In China* (Best Feature Documentary), and *Roads And Bridges* (Best Narrative Feature). The Grand Jury Award went to the Filipino import, *Azucena* (*Dog Food*), directed by Carlos Siguion-Reyna.

For more information about the festival, check out their website at SDAFF.org.—MM

Photos: Green Dragon and American Chai stills, courtesy of SDAFF; Shiri ©Kang Je-Kyu Film Co., Ltd.

KEIKO AGENA

Girl Next Door

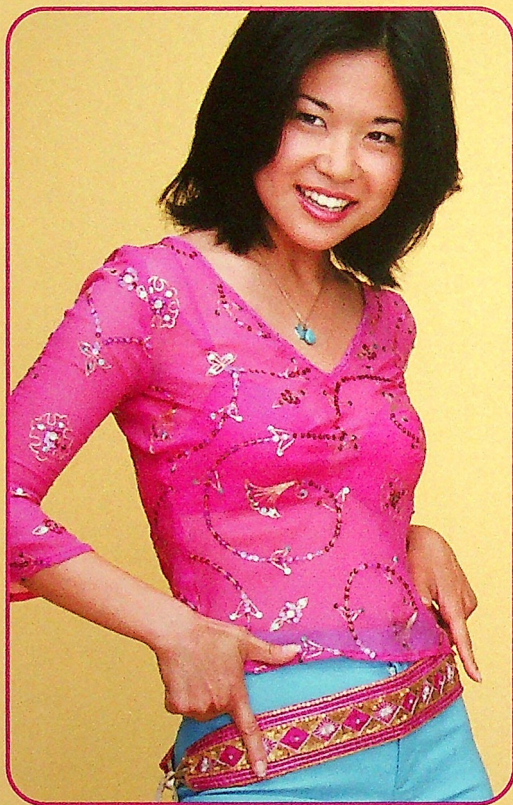
By BARBARA CHEN

Photos by Giuliano Bekor • Stylist: Taryn Hipwell • Make-up/Hair: Shigena Chun

She doesn't always look at you directly when speaking, but when she does, you feel like you're chatting with a best friend—which is fitting, because, as Rory Gilmore's closest bud Lane Kim on the WB's current hit, "Gilmore Girls," Keiko Agena is just that.

Aside from general youth and race, Agena, who is "a bit older" than the character she plays, shares little in common with her onscreen identity. (Agena won't reveal her own age—or even graduation year—so as not to dilute Lane's effectiveness. "I wish TV weren't that way," she explains.) In a casual zip-neck polo, shades, slippers and flared jeans, it's hard to tell by appearance alone what the actress' chronological age may be—characteristically petite and endearingly cute, she can easily pass for a local Bruin or other early 20-something stopping for *boba* in Brentwood.

In person, Agena somehow bears little physical resemblance to Lane, a less trendy, more overachieving, obedient-if-eccentric ("conflicted, funny and loyal," Agena describes) high school student confined by the hyper-conservativeness of her family. While Lane's closeted "fun side" is represented on the



show via concealed disco balls and CDs, the hidden articles have more to do with the religious grounding (not addressed in the show) of the actual family the character is taken from than any implied Asian tendency to emphasize the academic over the extracurricular. There are

instances, Agena concedes, of circumstances being played out to their extreme for "comic benefit." One example is a scene in which Lane and a date are surrounded at a distance by a band of chapter-ones comprised not only of parents (which, in this day and age, would already be

excessive), but also aunts, cousins and the like. Do such scenes hint at unseemly stereotypes, in any way?

"How do I say it delicately? There are things that... make me nervous, a little bit—because I don't want people to be offended," Agena says. "Personally, I don't take offense, but I know there must be people who do. Part of me is a little bit apologetic, but at the same time I don't want to be...critical of [the creative staff's] take on it, or their strive [toward] comedy."

Injurious or not, "Gilmore Girls," which after all is not based on Agena or her character's trials but rather the mother-daughter camaraderie of her cast-mates, has been lauded by both critics and audiences, holding its own against stalwart network shows in the same primetime slot—"Friends" and "Survivor" among them. This fall, the show moves from Thursday nights to Tuesdays at 8 p.m. (EST/PST) in its second season, and Agena is feeling pretty chummy with things thus far.

"I'm very thankful," the actress says, jesting that if she weren't acting, she'd likely be unjamming copy machines somewhere. "I never did the typical 'actor thing,' never was a waitress...I've



This page: purse and skirt by Lotta; shirt and shoes are Keiko's own.

Opposite page: Top and belt by Lotta; pants by Dollhouse; necklace by Illuminata @ Fragments.

always had office jobs and I'd probably be a secretary or something—because I come from a long line of secretaries."

While Agena traveled to Whitman College after high school and eventually Los Angeles to further study and pursue acting, her mother and sisters (she is the oldest of four girls) worked in less-theatrical environs just outside Honolulu, where Agena is originally from.

Here on the mainland, Agena finds "local" food in Gardena, a Southern California mainstay of both Japanese and Hawaiian culture—but at home in Glendale, Calif., it's the Calypso burger, all the way.

"I try to eat less carbohydrates and not so many sweets," Agena says, admitting the neighborhood burger joint is where she goes when she's treating herself.

"That, and drink lots of water...honestly, if you do that...you just naturally end up eating more fruits and vegetables."

Along those lines, Agena has self-imposed changes in her "diet" of mass media, to naturally expand her own ideals of beauty and attractiveness.

"I have the Caucasian ideal of beauty inside my head...you know, the Gwyneth Paltrow, Rachel on 'Friends'—what's her name?—that's (the image of beauty) embedded in my mind," she explains, "I am a true believer in advertising—billions of (ad) dollars are spent; (advertisers) wouldn't do it if it didn't work. I thought, 'Why don't I choose what to advertise to myself, put repeated images of my choice around my house?'"

To balance the barrage of images carrying the more expected, mainstream conven-

tions of beauty, Agena has plastered magazine clippings showcasing African-American and Asian-American women ("there aren't that many—I'll go through the whole magazine and maybe get two or three") around her room.

"It really...if just a little bit...it just kind of changes your idea of what's beautiful...it really works! So—advertise to yourself, that's

"My roommate had this room before me and painted it red, and it was a little too red for me, so I added the yellow...but then I ran out of the yellow and used the green at the top—so it kind of just happened that way, but wasn't intended to be a 'rasta room,'" she says.

Luckily, Agena's non-domestic objectives are a bit less haphazard than her bed-

lection of recent news items, as one of her favorites. "I hate the news sometimes...it's such plastic," she says, giggling while recounting an *Onion* article in which a "10-picture deal" serves as news-speak for a consumer purchase of ten movie tickets.

Between shooting days, Agena chills out by taking dips in her apartment pool ("my rather-than-running exercise"), staying away from nicotine ("quitting was a big thing for me") and enjoying generally casual living. "If I wasn't in this business..." she levels, "I'd have a sports bra—the most comfortable thing—on everyday, a tee-shirt and baggy jeans." Agena smiles at the thought. "I loved Grunge—I wish Grunge could've stayed forever...but look!" she cries, thrusting a leg out, "I made a little bit of an effort for you!"

The wardrobe effort, though appreciated by admiring cafe patrons ("I have to ask...where'd you get your jeans? I love them," one enthuses) is unnecessary—Agena's measured openness, genuine enthusiasm and neighborly demeanor make the dialogue much more a conversation than an interview. Even an untimely interruption by her well-intentioned, if over-eager, publicist reveals a natural loyalty to friends. Though some would find the excessive introduction, use of cell phone and the word "babe" gratuitous, Agena is gracious and gives her colleague full attention before picking up the process in earnest with such poise and readiness to continue that apologies seem needless. In this instance, it becomes clear that the actress needn't draw from too deep a well to play her part, and that the *Gilmore Girls* have a genuine friend in their midst. ♥

Keiko Agena with Alexis Bledel in "Gilmore Girls"



my new bumper sticker, advertise to yourself," she says.

A peep into Keiko's Corner—her bedroom—"on the verge of complete mess" she describes) leads one to believe the advertisement intended is for a Bob Marley rasta jam instead. Bold primary colors drench the walls, windows and room effects in semi-random "sure-why-not" fashion.

room would suggest—the actress demonstrates a vested interest in her craft by taking in as many movies as possible ("...to be in the loop") and perusing the showbiz rags—in addition to "O" ("I'm an addict of the Oprah show!" she professes)—to keep on top of industry developments.

Entertainment news aside, Agena surfs online periodically for "current events," citing *TheOnion.com*, a satirical col-

LYRICS BORN

Music, Myself & Truth

By JONATHAN GRESLEY Photo by Jonathan Gresley, Abstracted by The Mystery Parade

As co-founder of the Bay Area based Quannum Projects recording label, half of the hip-hop duo Latyrx, and Blackalicious co-conspirator, Lyrics Born defies most of the stereotypes associated with the title of hip-hop MC. He's produced tracks alongside some of the most influential and promising hip-hop artists in the industry, including DJ Shadow, Dan the Automator, Jurassic 5, and The Poets of Rhythm just to name a few. Born in Tokyo and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Lyrics Born (a.k.a. Tom Shimura) has paid his dues, putting in long hours writing and producing original tracks. With over ten years of recording music, he continues to develop and expand his signature style, all the while bringing back the funky old-school fundamentals to create a sound that's uniquely soulful. YOLK sat down with Lyrics Born in the East Bay Area for lunch and some insight into his experiences.

YOLK: When did you first hear hip-hop?

Lyrics Born: In 1980, that's when we moved to Berkeley. I heard rap from kids at school, not even through the radio. Just kids singin' the lyrics. And I was like, "What the hell is this?" It was like nothin' I'd ever heard, you know?

Did it catch you right away?

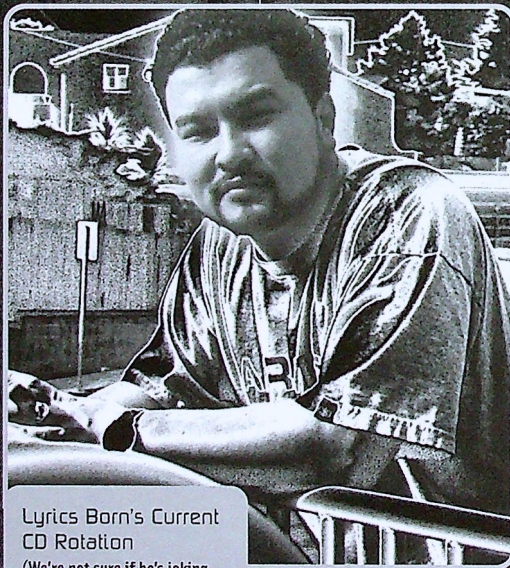
Yeah, and the thing that caught me about it was that it was something I could do. At that time I thought, you

didn't necessarily need to be trained, it's not like playin' a guitar or something like that. Anybody could do it, maybe not well, but...it was really exciting. And I could go home and listen to the radio and hear things like, "Baby we can do it, take your time, do it right..." and I was like, "Can you say that on the

air?" I was shocked.

So what was the first rap record you ever heard?

Sugar Hill Gang, that was the first. Then there was "Double Dutch Bus," Marry Jane Girls, S.O.S. Band; I consider all that stuff hip-hop. 'Cause at that time, there wasn't really, at least in California, from my experience, there wasn't any



Lyrics Born's Current CD Rotation

(We're not sure if he's joking about the Missy Elliot track...)

Lyrics Born "Later That Day" • Missy Elliot "So Addictive" • Kweli & Hi-Tek "Train Of Thought" • Buju Banton "Unchained Spirit" • Muro "Diggin Ice, Vol. 3" • Poets of Rhythm "Discern Define" • Vangelis "Blade Runner Soundtrack" • The Family Stand "Connected" • Cannibal Ox "The Cold Vein"

distinction between that and hip-hop. It wasn't separate music, it was just kind of a different style of, let's say, Funk or R&B or something like that.

Who would you say have been your biggest influences?

In the 80's, the people that I strongly identified with were KRS One, T-La-Rock, or Cool G Rap. Then in the early 90's, I was really influenced by Ninja

Man, as I was really getting heavily into dancehall. Those artists kinda gave me the basis, provided me with the do's and don'ts, the implications of what could be. And then from there, I just started paying attention to other kinds of music and art. A lot of years have gone by since I have been heavily into one person. But if you listen real hard you can probably hear all those people. Everything has been synthesized so much at this point, and I'm just really not tryin' to do anything that I don't see myself doing.

How has your style changed?

I think as I get a little older, I get a little braver in certain ways. And I also get a little less likely to do something that I don't feel is right for me. I don't feel like I need to channel experimental energy in the wrong way. As you go on, you just sort of gather information, you get feedback, and you start to focus your energy on things that you really are trying to discover. As opposed to not really having any parameters to work within. So, I've always changed, I'm always changing.

Why the change of your name from Asia Born to Lyrics Born?

It was a product of when I was younger, and I, like most people, bought into the idea that [Asians] are all the same, but we're not. We're extremely diverse, as a group. I think it

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LEA SALONGA

Sweet Song Of Success

By X.D. LIM

Photography: Jaimee Itagaki · Stylist: Damien King · Make-up: Alisa Chompupong · Hair: Eric Scot for Fred Segal Beauty/L'Oréal Professionnel

Chloe Stuart is in a karaoke joint belting out a sardonic rendition of "Tomorrow." Her every movement is comically big, like she's performing for the back row of Carnegie Hall. And her eyes speak volumes, as if to say, "This blank performance face has been hammered into me by countless of Broadway's moodiest directors, grumpiest singing coaches, and bitchiest choreographers." In every word, Stuart is wryly beaming a big musical *fuck you*.

To one side sits Lea Salonga, Tony Award-winning performer for Broadway's "Miss Saigon" and veteran of those moodiest, grumpiest, and bitchiest. And what is she doing? She's laughing her ass off. "I'm off the clock!" Salonga announces, her very tone says you shouldn't take her, or things in general, too seriously. This is the real Salonga, a vivacious individual who just got her driver's license (hasn't learned stick yet, but she wants to), has a

love of Mac computers (particularly the Titanium Powerbook), and who has only seen one Woody Allen movie, the musical *Everyone Says I Love You*, of course.

Tonight Salonga's in an overpriced Japanese joint just wanting to be as cheesy and as unfettered as the next person is. She's not here to dominate the play-list or scare people away from the microphone. She's here to let off steam along with her castmates from David Henry

Hwang's campy updating of Rodger & Hammerstein's "Flower Drum Song," debuting this fall at LA's Mark Taper Forum.

Salonga's position in musical theater was one she was born and bred into. Her first performance—one of the children in "The King and I"—was her introduction. She was seven. A stint in "Saigon," "Les Miserables," two of Disney's biggest animation films (the genre landmark *Aladdin* and the social land-

Embroidery &
sequin blouse,
sparkle jeans by
Lotta/Melrose

mark *Mulan*), a few homeland Filipino films, and even "As The World Turns" have served to reiterate that Salonga is a performer.

YOLK: I hear it's easier to sing in front of a thousand people instead of forty.

LEA SALONGA: It's much easier to sing when you can't see the people you're singing to. You think you're all by yourself.

Screen acting is so different than stage acting. Have you made any adjustments?

I've been told that I'm acting too big. That I need tone it down. And I try to take all my criticisms with a good attitude with the hope that I'm going to get better. If somebody has something to say to me that will improve what I'm doing, then I welcome it. Just don't insult me. Doing "Flower Drum Song" in LA marks the largest span of time you've spent here. After coming from New York and London, what do you think? When I first got to LA it was so quiet. It was a little bit freaky. In many ways it was louder that way, but I have assimilated to living here. When I used to live in this building back in New York, there was this guy who killed his girlfriend as a crime of passion. And let me tell you, I was happy to be moving out.

And now you like driving around here instead.

Yeah. There are no time tables or train lines to worry about. Instead, you sit in traffic a lot. Come to think of it, that's not exactly better. Have you encountered any of the notorious passive/aggressiveness from other actors at auditions? I keep to myself in my auditions. I'm usually lost in my sides or my preparations. Most of the time no one knows me or at least they don't have a true idea of who I am.

What is the biggest misconception about you?

There are some people who have this perception of me that pertains to my personality or how I pertain to people. About the worst thing people say about me who don't know me is that I'm arrogant. There is a word in Tagalog. They think I'm *suplada*. It means I'm snooty or arrogant or snobbish.

Who thinks this?

I guess people back home in the Philippines. I'm perceived to be someone "bougeese," someone very bourgeoisie. I think it's because I speak such good English. Whenever I work at home, I'm told that

I should speak more Tagalog but my Tagalog is not my strongest suite. I'd like to think that the masses are smarter. I was brought up in an English-speaking home because my parents were brought up in two different parts of the country and their dialects weren't compatible. Sounds like a crisis of identity. Yeah, a bit. I'm asked all the time if I'm Asian American, but I identify myself as Filipino. I was born there. I was raised there. And it doesn't matter how well you speak the languages or what region of the country you're from. I'm just from that country. And I identify strongly with

that country and with my values. That's who I am. This rendition of "Flower Drum Song" is supposed to be pretty campy and racy. And Philippine values are notoriously conservative. Any conflicts? It's not too bad. The night club stuff is a little campy. But you will see the difference on how the immigrant character behaves and how the American characters—the Asians who were born here—behave. And the delineations are made very clear, which is for the show.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable with the material you were doing? I've been pretty fortunate that with the shows I've done I've been pretty comfortable on stage. I mean in "Saigon" there were the skimpy costumes, which were a little bit difficult to deal with because a lot of us came from the Philippines. And we were like, "Oh my gosh, what is my mother going to think?" But people were really supportive. And they said it was all about the show itself anyway, and that they weren't really going to be paying attention to what I'm wearing. So I trusted my loved ones and they were right. It was a little bit of a concern for me because I was the one up there with my body in display.

Catholics, of which most of the Philippines identifies with, have a notorious hard-line view on homosexuality. And musical theater is, well, decidedly not straight. Have you ever had a moral dilemma because of this?

No. Not really. But I will say there's a blanket set of morals that should be followed by every human being, whatever your sexual orientation. A friend of mine came out, he told me he was gay. And I said that by doing so doesn't give you the right for 'inappropriate behavior.' It doesn't give you license to be



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YONGYOOT THONGKONGTOON

The Man Behind Iron Ladies

By OANH LY Photos courtesy of Strand Releasing

Who ever thought a gay sports film would beat out *Mission Impossible 2* at the box office? Well it did...in Thailand. That's the country that gave us an all-gay 1996 Volleyball State Championship Team and the film *Iron Ladies* loosely based on their real life story. In a country where non-American or non-Hong Kong films don't do well financially, *Iron Ladies* broke the box office records and a lot of taboos along with it. A first time director and his cast of first time actors won the hearts of Thai audiences and several international Film Festival Audience Awards from Sydney, San Francisco, New York and Berlin. Director Yongyoot Thongkongsatien tells YOLK how it happened.

YOLK: How old are you now?

YONGYOOT THONGKONGTOON:

Thirty-four years old.

When did you start working on the film?

Three years ago. I knew about the story and I knew that they were trying to make it into a movie. It took one year just to try to convince Tai Entertainment, the production company who bought the rights to the story, to give me the directing job and another year working on the screenplay.

How long was the shoot for the film?

The shooting lasted 4 months.

What was the casting like?

At first, we naturally looked at gay and transsexual actors for the role. At auditions,

they were all first time actors except for one, the actor who plays Chai who plays the only straight volleyball player. But when we saw the audition tape for Sahaphap Tor Weerakhamin who plays Mon and is a real life Thai rock star, it changed my view about casting. He's straight but he was so convincing as the gay character. First, we were looking for gay or transsexual actors. But he did such a good job, I had to cast the best actor for the role. So we decided to cast straight actors

did you have odd jobs like the rest of us?

I've directed ever since I left college. I do commercials for a premiere Thai advertising studio for bread and butter. I've worked in commercial shooting for more than ten years. From a best boy to assistant director and director.

What kind of products did you direct commercials for in Thailand? Shampoo, toothpaste, Coke, Shell, P&G product, Uni-lever product, Kentucky Fried Chicken.



to play the gay roles.

So all the actors are straight?

All except Gokgorn Benjathikoon, who plays the transsexual.

I found the relationship between Coach Bee and her players special. She was their mother figure. Is that what the real relationship is like?

Actually yes, we based it on their real relationship. Another writer and me spent a lot of time with the real volleyball team and the real coach Bee is very good to the players.

Have you always been a director, or

Are you still directing commercials now?

Yes.

Where do you live now?

Bangkok.

But you're originally from Lampang right?

Yes. That's where the volleyball team is from too. That's another reason why I wanted to do this movie so much, because they represented my hometown. I followed the story from the beginning.

Has *Iron Ladies* made you famous?

A little famous.

What are some of your favorite films,

directors, and actors? Who do you want to work with in the future?

I like Helen Hunt and Kate Hudson. The person I want to work with most is Steven Spielberg.

Who doesn't? What film are you working on next? What is it about? It is *Iron Ladies*, the Prequel. What's the audience's reaction like? The audience reaction is love and tears for the film.

Has *Iron Ladies* made these first-time actors famous? Are any of them acting in any films now?

Yes, some of them are.

Have you met with anyone in Hollywood yet? Have any producers or American film companies approached you about work yet?

Not yet, but I hope I have the chance.

Where do you see yourself in three years?

I am making more films and playing with my daughter, who is five now.

How do your parents feel about you being a director?

They're proud of me.

What makes you most proud of the film?

I'm proud to tell a story about people from my hometown. Also when I see people cry and show their love for the film, it makes me happy. What's the attitude in Thailand like regarding the *katoeys* (gays and transvestites)? Are they accepted without discrimination?

They still have problems with some Thai people, more often out in the countryside, but mostly they are accepted.

Everyone gets along okay. ♥

JOHN WOO

War & Peace

By ALEX LUU

Photographer: Diego Ordóñez · Still photography: Stephen Vaughan, courtesy of MGM Pictures

Sitting in a dark screening room at Glen Glenn Sound Studio in West Hollywood, John Woo looks a bit tired and harried. Almost six months after principal photography in Hawaii—where tropical rainstorms prevented the completion of certain scenes—Woo has barely finished a series of reshoots in Los Angeles and is now beginning to put the final touches on the sound mix for his most ambitious project yet.

Based on the true story of Navajo code talkers that played a decisive role in World War II in thwarting enemy Japanese troops, *Windtalkers* stars Nicolas Cage, Adam Beach (*Smoke Signals*), and Christian Slater. At press time, the film's release date has



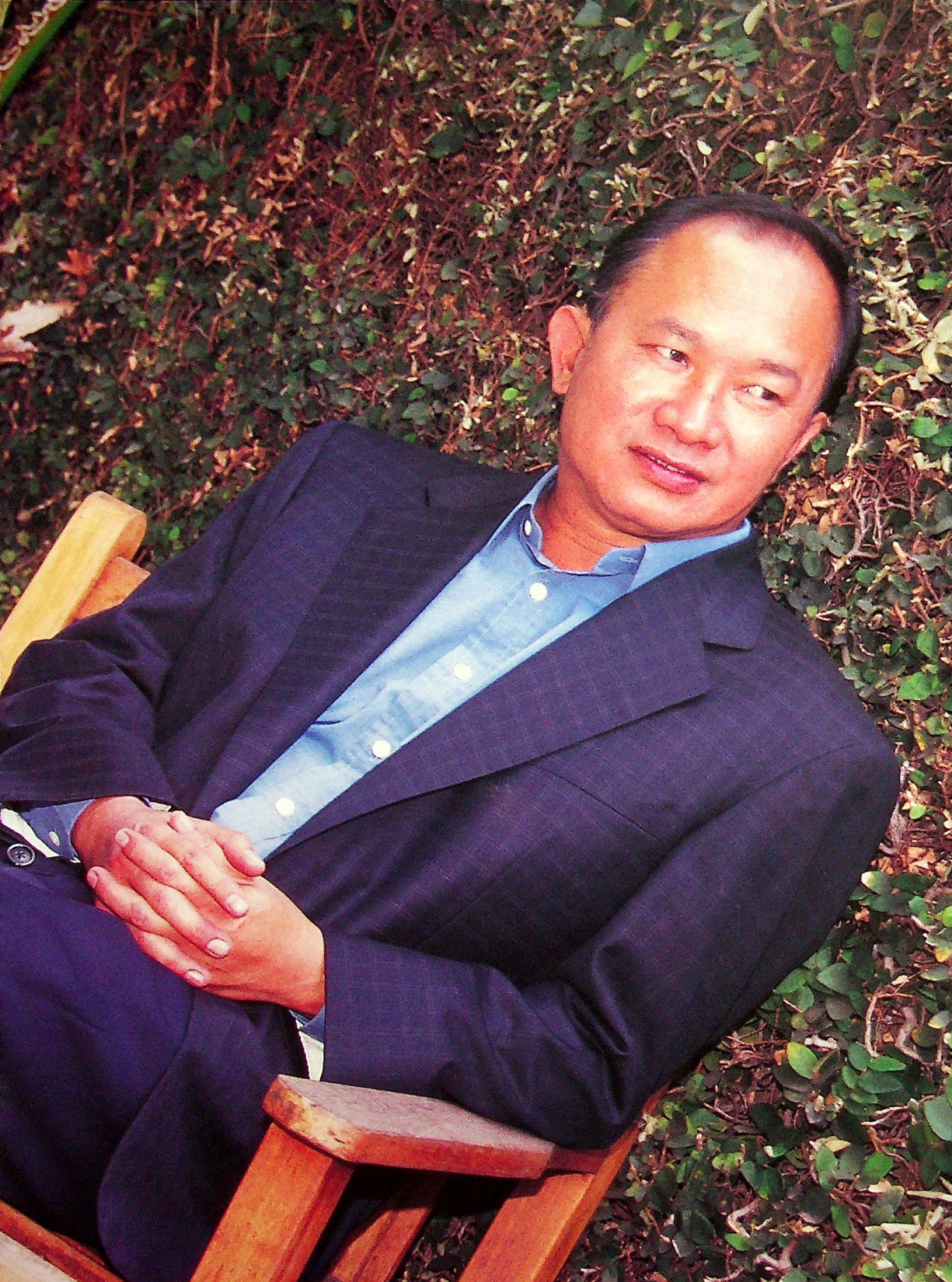
been pushed from November to June 2002. Taking a break from watching images of Beach and Cage engaged in a tense standoff, Woo talks with YOLK about his epic war movie, the loyalty of actors and crewmembers, and his new life away from Hong Kong.

YOLK: What's the basic storyline of

Windtalkers?

JOHN WOO: During WWII, the Marines were using the Navajo people as code talkers. They were using the Navajo language as codes. There's no written form of the Navajo language so it's hard for the Japanese to break it. In wartime the code is more important than human life.

Every code talker has a protector. Nicolas Cage is the guy who protects the code talkers. He also has the order to kill the code talkers if the Japanese captures them. That's the basis of the story. What about the story attracted you? Nicolas Cage's character is a Marine who is extremely conflicted. He's a soldier who has been through hell and back. Up to now, he's faced the horrors of war and a lot of his friends are dead because of him. So he's become very bitter and hateful. He doesn't have peace in his heart. Throughout the film, he experiences a change through his association with Adam Beach's character. Adam influences him and Adam also learns something from Nicolas. It's



symbolic of the East and the West coming together. They develop a strong friendship. At one point in the story Nicolas has to kill one of Adam's friends who is also a code talker. After that Adam hates what Nicolas stands for and they have a complex relationship that leads to the climax. Aside from the unique story of the code talkers, the film is also about friendship. That's one of my favorite themes.

Without having seen the film yet, the themes of brotherhood, friendship, and ultimate betrayal remind me a lot of one of your best films, *Bullet In The Head*.

Definitely. *Bullet* was also a film about friendship tested by war. The friends are all damaged by war. It's sad to see people killing each other and engaged in war. As for myself, I am anti-war; I hate to see people killing each other. War only causes damage and it's no good for both sides. There's no enemy; there's no winner. *Windtalkers* also has a message of anti-war and that people should learn to live and work together.

What were some of the unique challenges during production on this movie as opposed to your previous ones?

The most difficult part of production was the budget. This is one of my biggest budgets. It was about \$120 million and the trick was how to keep it under that and still do what I wanted to do. This movie involved so many big things. There were about 400 crew members on the set everyday and there were also thousands of extras. Another difficulty was the weather. When we were shooting in Hawaii, there was so much rain that hit us. We lost a lot of scheduled shooting days. We had to cut out scenes to fit into the schedule. It was pouring rain almost every week. People

were working in the mud and the trucks were getting stuck in the mud. We shot two big battle scenes in Hawaii and there times when we weren't able to get any shots off. Every shot involved over 200 explosives.

Being this is a war movie based on historical fact, how did you handle the action sequences?

With the action sequences I tried to make it more like a documentary. I want everything to look real, down to a guy blowing up. I wanted to

because it's a very serious topic. There's no joking in war.

What were some things that you specifically did to make sure the movie would adhere to the truth as much as possible?

We had three military advisors and the real Navajo code talkers as supervisors on the set. Every shot we had to ask them to make sure things were right and authentic. Even simple things such as holding a gun or dodging a bullet we still need to do it



Christian Slater and Roger Willie in *Windtalkers*

give it a very realistic feel. We were using up to 13 cameras in the big action scenes including helicopter shots. We had two or three cameramen with handheld cameras dressed as Marines following the actors and the action. It's very different than my usual style. My kind of action is pretty stylish like *MI2* and *The Killer* and *Hard Boiled*. There's not much slow motion shots and no two guns shooting and flipping in the air and diving everywhere. Because the movie is so emotional and it's something about my philosophy, it's all about humanity and I wanted a very traditional way of telling the story. It tells the story very honestly. I want everything to look real

right. All the actors were sent to boot camp for seven days of training. On the first action sequence, there were about 500 Marines and 300 Japanese including the actors. There were roughly 1,000 people and tanks. There were big explosions and fireballs everywhere. It was pretty wild. I was suggesting the actors use the stunt doubles because most of it was wide shots and you wouldn't even recognize them. But Nicolas and Christian and Adam wanted to do it themselves. I said, "Why? It's such a far shot anyway. I don't want you guys getting hurt." But they didn't listen to me. They said, "We are the Marines!" All the actors just walked into the field and did the scene. Some

of the extras were ex-Marines and have been trained. So that's why I just dressed up a couple of cameramen as Marines to get some great close-up shots. They didn't care that they were right in the middle of the explosion. Was Nicolas Cage your first choice? After I read the script the first person in my mind was Nic. After *Face/Off*, we became very good friends. We understand each other very well. We don't need to talk much on the set. It's a lot like working with Chow Yun-Fat. It's very easy because we read each other's minds. Nic's so emotional. That's why I think he's so good for this character. He can do so many different layers. In the script, originally the character is Irish. So the writers and studio were looking for an Irish actor. Since I like Nic so much, I asked the writer to change his nationality to Italian. So the character became Italian American. When Nic read the script he loved it. He's seen *Bullet In The Head* and he loved it very much and he's always wanted to work on a movie with me that's kind of like that movie. He felt that *Windtalkers* has similar emotions like *Bullet*. When he watched *Bullet*, he cried. He always talks about Tony Leung and Chow Yun Fat.

How'd you end up casting Adam Beach?

When we dealt with the Navajo tribe they were hoping that we'd use all Navajo actors. It was difficult to find real Navajos who were actors. Our casting director traveled around the country to Utah, Santa Fe, and other places to interview 400 young Navajo people. But we couldn't find anyone. This is a very important role. It's not a supporting role. It's a main role. Then, Terence (Chang) saw Adam

Beach in *Smoke Signals* and he liked Adam's performance. He's not Navajo but an Indian from North America. We had to talk to the Navajo leader and get his approval. We explained to him that we weren't able to find a good actor from the Navajos we interviewed and that Adam was the best actor for the part. They agreed because they also liked Adam. The code talkers association still exists, so they're very serious about this kind of thing. **After all these years of success in Hollywood, is it still hard for you to find good scripts and stories? How do you and Terence decide which project to work on?**

Yes, it is. We usually get new scripts everyday. Terence is a great partner. He makes the selections. He knows my style and he knows what I want. I also want to do something I've never done before like the war movie or musical or the Western. For myself, I'm getting more serious. I want to do some very serious things. Anything that has to do with human nature I want to do. But I never would like to make a science-fiction film because I'm not good at it. I don't even know anything about computers! I love to watch them but I don't think I can make a good sci-fi movie. Unfortunately, most scripts that are sent to me are action. I'm not only good at action; I hate people only seeing me as an action director. I always want to do something unusual, something very human. I love drama. But for the moment, I have about seven projects for myself. They're all very good scripts. One is a Western; one is a very elegant comedy like the Cary Grant movies. It's a spy movie but it's a comedy. Another one is a love story. In our company we have about 40 projects in development so

we're very busy.

Are you committed to working with Asian American actors?

One of the biggest projects I have in development is called *Men of Iron*. It's the story about the 18th century when the Irish and Chinese were building the railroads. It's a great topic for us to make. It's based on a true story. Of course, the characters are fictional but all the events are based on truth. It's about how they built the railroads and the conflict between the two



groups and shows how they worked together. It also shows the great contribution from the Chinese to America. It's a very ambitious project. Of course there are no gunfights but there is great drama. There are also lots of amazing disaster scenes based on what really happened when the railroads were being constructed. Of course we would use a lot of Asian American actors. We also like to invite Chow Yun Fat to play one of the major roles in the film. We're always looking for great projects for Asian American actors. Terence feels especially strong about this. But it's very hard to find the right topic for the Asian actor. **What are some things you absolutely will not do?**

When I came to Hollywood I had three principles. One is if the topic would give Asians a bad image; second, if it's about the Chinatown thing; third, if the movie is hurting the Chinese image then I won't do it. If there's any small thing that goes against those three rules I pass on it. **Aside from Hollywood and movie making, how has it been for your family after being in the US all these years?**

We are fine and we are at peace. My family is very happy because we have more time to talk with each other and get together. In HK, it was crazy. We work under tremendous pressure. You have to work harder and better than the others do. We had to work seven days a week, almost 20 hours a day. You have no time for your family. There was a lot of misunderstanding between my family and me. Here, people don't work on the weekends and there's more time for privacy. That's why I have lots more time to communicate with my family, especially my children. All they want is a father's love. I never really gave it to them when I was in HK because I was working so much. I hate to go to any social party. When I get in the car, I go to work. When I get out of the car, I go to the kitchen. I cook everyday for my family. That's my only hobby and I feel very happy about it. I'm so grateful to the film society here because they've been so supportive of me and giving me lots of opportunities. Everyone is so nice to me. All the crew members and actors really love to work with me. I've also learned so much from them too. I have a new life here. That makes me feel like I have to do a better job and do my best to return the favor. I'm really happy. ☺

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MICHELLE KRUSIEC

Girl On A Wire

By X.D. LIM

Photographer: Huey Tran • Stylist: Brandy St. John • Make-up: Sonia Lee/Chris Willis Artist Management

Hair: Yukiko Kinkel • Location: The Culver Hotel, Culver City, CA

With three solid years on the family show "One World" under her belt, Michelle Krusiec is saying goodbye to goody two-shoes roles and HELLO to more racier fare with HBO's "The Mind Of The Married Man."




"The duck is stiff and the tofu is rubbery. But those fried wontons aren't too bad—probably because they're fried," says actress Michelle Krusiec as she frowns over what we ordered.

She's right. It takes talent to find bad Thai food in Los Angeles. It's sort of like finding bad dim sum in Queens or lousy sushi in Hawaii—it's possible but you'd have to really be trying! And yet one cannot help but admire over-achievers, as the pair of us single-handedly found the worst Thai joint this side of a mall food court. I didn't have the heart to tell her who was responsible for the duck and the tofu, or just who should take credit for the fried wontons. But I didn't have to. She beat me to it. // // //

She's the one who ultimately stopped at this Century City joint. She's the one who ordered the cheery cubes and the firm fowl. And when it comes to taking responsibility, she's the one with no problem admitting it.

YOLK: So, you're a 'Hokey? **MICHELLE KRUSIEC:** (Smiles as if caught) Yes, I'm a Hokey. Do you know what that is? That would be the mascot of Virginia Tech, a castrated turkey. Did you know what a Hokey was before you went there?

Yes, I did. We used to have a sound for it. (Krusiec makes a noise with her mouth and throat, demonstrating great

A full-page photograph of a woman in a black, long-sleeved, form-fitting dress and long black gloves. She is in a dynamic, athletic pose, leaning forward with her right leg bent and her left leg extended back. She is wearing black high-heeled sandals with thin straps. The background is a grand room with large windows, classical columns, and a patterned rug.

"I'm fascinated
by things that
people do that
might not be
socially
acceptable.
When you can
find heroes and
show that
they're
flawed...it's the
most human
thing that you
can do."

This page: top by Rami
Kashou; skirt from
Squaresville, Melrose; shoes
by Giuseppe Zanotti.
Opposite page: dress by
Lloyd Klein; shoes by
Giuseppe Zanotti.

coordination and oral dexterity.)

Impressive. So one of your first jobs after school was the host of the syndicated show, "Travelers."

Yes. It was a big acting lesson because hosting is a lot like acting.

How so?

I had to figure out my personality on camera. I think that at such a young age, I was just fresh out of college—like 21 years old, and everyone else was in their late 20's to early 30's—I felt myself wanting to be smarter or sound more eloquent; try and prove that I was intelligent enough to handle the show. And I started learning that there is quite a technique to interviews, how to ask questions and how to listen to answers. All those things that I learned really shaped who I am now. So now you're comfortable in front of a camera.

Yeah. I mean, there is always a certain amount of voyeurism when you have that camera in front of you. But maybe now I don't regard it as voyeurism, I see it as just another presence. I don't feel the need to turn something on and turn something off.

Tell me then about the film *Pumpkin*.

It's the forthcoming movie I did with Christina Ricci. It's by Zoetrope Studios and Francis Ford Coppola's daughter Zoë produced it. It's really a great script. Ricci falls in love with a handicapped boy and she belongs to a sorority. And I'm one of the sisters who tries to put a stop to the relationship because I'm an evil person. It was a very cool shoot. And I liked the character. She's memorable and quirky.

And then there's HBO's "The Mind Of The Married Man." Interesting title. Well the title speaks for itself. The show deals with the realities of marriage from a married man's point of view. It's



Top by
Natalie Anne;
shoes from
Squaresville,
Melrose;
accessories
from Jennifer
Kaufman, Los
Angeles.

done exceptionally well in terms of writing. The editing is also superb.

And your character "Sachiko" comes with some controversy?

Well, when I first saw this role, my manager forewarned me. She said, "Look, I think you're really going to have a reaction to the character but it's really a good show to be on." She faxed me the sides and they said, literally:

Japanese girl. Massage parlor. Accent. And she must be... topless.

O-kee-do-kee.

And sometimes you see these characters and you think the worst. Or you wonder what's it going to be about. And I had all these hesitations. But there's also a part of me that sees this interesting character and wonders.

How is Sachiko an interesting character?

Well, first of all, I'm fascinated by characters that work in taboo places, like strippers. I like to watch "Real Sex," so I'm fascinated by things that people do that might not be socially acceptable. I also like darker characters. I'm fascinated by them. Bad people are always better. When you can find heroes and show that they're flawed—show their hubris—it's the most human thing that you can do. I also think this role has a great deal of potential.

Is Sachiko a victim?

No. And you can play her as a victim. She could've been used cheaply. But I don't think it was the intention of the show. And I think they really wanted somebody to step in and "get" this person. Mike Binder, the main character, is a married man who needs somebody to listen to him. He needs someone to serve as a therapist in a sense. And if you give the story a chance it shows how the two people really function

as a service to one another, which is a really great thing about this series.

But you had your reservations?

When I found that me getting this role was a reality, I really started to feel the weight of the Asian community. I don't think I like responsibility, but I feel the weight of it. I didn't want to portray a character that I thought might put Asians in a negative light.

And my fear, of course, was that they were going to entice me with a high concept character but in the end they might not come through and I'd be left as a stereotype. But it was pretty clear from the beginning when I stepped on that set that they knew what they were going to do and they did it. I took a risk and I'm really happy about it. I felt like if there is going to be this character, then at least let me take a shot at making her into something—as opposed to somebody else who might depict this woman as a typical stereotype. I could instill my own understanding of this person and make her even more interesting. But I felt with my understanding of immigrants and my understanding as an actress, I felt like I could give more to this character. Being topless also was a huge thing. But it actually was easier to do than it was to accept. The decision was so difficult but when I got on the set and I had to do it, it was easy.

And it worked out?

Well, fortunately I took a giant leap and fell into good hands. "Sachiko" has been one of my favorite roles so far. And as for social responsibility—I hope I didn't come off too righteous—but what I believe in and what I end up doing may be miles apart. But I try to live my life with a sense of consciousness. And I

think that's what I was trying to get across.

What did the parental units think?

My dad was like, "It's fine with me. We're in a new millennium. Sex isn't the same anymore." But he also said I should ask my mom, like she would have a fit or something. But my mom once said I should pose for *Playboy*—my mom always believed that if you're going to pose you might as well get your money. And my dad was like, "Honey, you'd never get into *Playboy*. Not with your breasts, darling." (wry smile) Of course they haven't really seen the show yet.

But in the end, you're proud of the experience?

Yes. Very. And you know what, after doing "Married Man," I'm a lot more free with my body. I'm actually having a party for the show and I'm asking people to come topless. I figured I'm going to be topless, so why shouldn't they be?

Do you think people are going to show up topless?

(Wickedly laughs) Oh yeah. I have some wild friends! They're just looking for an excuse.

I remembered when you did "Star Trek." You played a tragic character who barely spoke a word, really similar to Samantha Morton's role in Woody Allen's *Sweet and Lowdown*. Not the common role for an Asian actress. How was it?

It was great. It was so fun. First of all, my father is such a Star Trek fan. He'd always go, "Star Trek! When ya gonna be in Star Trek?" Finally I told him I was going to be on but I didn't tell him I wasn't going to have any lines, which of course later his complaint was, "I wish you had spoken more." But I really enjoyed that role because it was so theatrical and I really used all the skills

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ON THE SET OF *THE ONE* WITH JET LI

There Can Only Be One

The sky is clear. The usual film of smog that envelops Los Angeles' skyscrapers in a shroud of gray is thinner today, almost translucent. The heat in the air almost makes you forget that it is late April. That it is actually spring. Dryness accompanies the heat, made all the more unbearable by the scorching blast of the sun above. On a mostly deserted street named Bixel, a white building stands alone, as if forgotten by its higher and more imposing



brethren such as the Arco Tower, Library Tower, and the Interstate Building in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. Formerly the Unocal Building, this seemingly vacant 8-plus story building has been converted into one of Hollywood's newest studios. Inside, the air conditioner's cool stream is a welcome relief from the hot temperature outdoors. HMI lights, C-stands, grips, and dolly tracks fill the cavernous hallways and conference rooms.

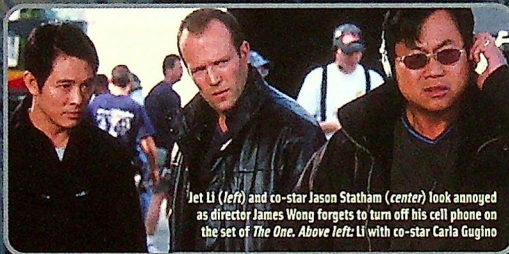


By ALEX LUU

Photos courtesy of Columbia/TriStar Motion Picture Group and Revolution Studios



On the fifth floor, sleek gray metallic beams line the walls. Nearly three and a half inches thick, they snake up toward the open-air ceiling and into a spider web-like design. The steel tentacles connect to a large sphere that emits an almost blinding white light onto the black floor below. Clad in black from head to toe, Hong Kong's most lethal action import Jet Li stands ready to pulverize his opponent. Facing Li is a body double,



Jet Li (left) and co-star Jason Statham (center) look annoyed as director James Wong forgets to turn off his cell phone on the set of *The One*. Above left: Li with co-star Carla Gugino

also dressed in black. Behind the monitors and with his back facing a long rectangular panel of storyboards, director James Wong furrows his brow. "Action!" yells Wong. Li leaps

in the air, spins his body around, and double-kicks his adversary. Before the man lands on the floor, Li lets loose a fury of combination punches to the chest. All this

in about 2.5 seconds. Wong yells, "Cut!" and they do it again. And again. And yet again. By the seventh take, Wong is visibly disturbed. Wong walks over to Li and whispers a few words before returning to his monitor. "Action!" and the scene plays out again, this time even faster than the preceding takes. Wong's cell phone rings and he answers it, "Can I call you back? I'm just in a bad mood right now." On the eighth take, Li delivers, put-

JAMES WONG & GLEN MORGAN Partners In Time

James Wong and Glen Morgan are a bit of an anomaly in Hollywood. They've been pals since high school, paid their dues as lowly production assistants on countless productions, and managed to parlay their kinship and trust in each other into success in TV and films years later. Wong and Morgan are destined to surpass their wild success on shows such as "The X-Files," "Millennium," and "The Others." Here the team behind last year's sleeper hit *Final Destination* talk to *YOLK* from the set of their latest big screen Jet Li actioner *The One*.

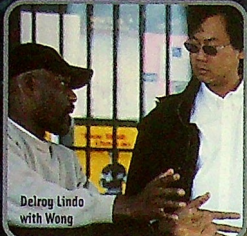
YOLK: The concept of parallel worlds has been done before with movies like *Timecop*. What makes *The One* unique?

JAMES WONG: Well, we wanted Jet to fight himself. When you do a movie like this, your biggest drawback is the villain. In order to have a great conflict with the hero you have to have as strong a villain as possible. Otherwise there's no competition. Here you have Jet, who's arguably the best martial artist in the world, so who do you pick as his opponent?

GLEN MORGAN: I was reading about parallel universes and people talk about these different theories. Some scientists really believe that parallel universes do exist. We were talking about physics and what if matter doesn't disappear; instead it just gets transformed. For example, when a bomb explodes the atoms that form whatever you are just gets reconfigured into another wholly different thing. Matter doesn't disintegrate. What if your life force is the same thing—what if when you die there are

ting a more stylistic spin in his kick. "Cut!" Wong likes what he sees. "Okay, next setup."

Co-written by Wong and his partner Glen Morgan, *The One* boasts a \$50 million budget with Li in the lead(s) and a stellar supporting cast that includes Delroy Lindo (*Romeo Must Die*, *Malcolm X*), Jason Statham (*Ghost Of Mars*, *Snatch*) and Carla Gugino (*Spy Kids*). Responsible for some of the more disturbing episodes of "The X-Files" and "Millennium," as well as the sleeper hit feature *Final Destination*, Wong and Morgan have created a complex story that involves a futuristic Multiverse where multiple worlds (Stygian Penal Colony and Happy Land Universe being two of them) simultaneously exist. Li plays both Gabe and Yulaw, mirror versions of each other. Yulaw is the villain who discovers that the more versions of himself he kills, the stronger he can



Delroy Lindo with Wong



become. Gabe, on the other hand, is a peace-loving cop who has a wife, dog, and stable life. When Yulaw annihilates all 123 versions of himself, he goes after Gabe in a bloody quest to become "The One."

For the next two hours, Li goes through an exhaustive

pace of setup after setup. One scene calls for Li to be man handled and thrown violently into a metal chair by two metallic-garbed officers. Another scene has Li being captured by actor Statham, who along with Lindo, plays a Multiverse agent sent to enlist the aid of Gabe against

the diabolical Yulaw. The meticulous process of reshooting scenes from opposite angles is not just for standard coverage of close-ups and establishing shots. Since the whole storyline demands that Li go mano a mano with himself, the reverse angles are crucial in establishing the separate characteristics, physical prowess, and emotions of both Gabe and Yulaw. The seemingly endless setups of each scene underscore the themes of time travel, energy being reborn, and repetition of actions and consequences inherent in *The One*.

Finally, there is a brief break between setups as Wong, Morgan, and action choreographer/fight director Corey Yuen (see sidebar, p.41) prepare for yet another complex shot. Li sits down and takes a deep breath. "It's a pretty cool idea, the Multiverse," Li says matter-of-factly. "I've never played good guy and bad guy at the same time. I fight myself, act dif-

all these other you(s). The energy doesn't disappear; it just gets redistributed.

It sounds like there were a lot of different dynamics and elements that went into the creation and development of this film.

JW: Definitely. When we thought of those things then you start coming



Wong with collaborator and friend Glen Morgan

up with a "superman,"—a more powerful man idea. Here's a guy who figures that out and he thinks, "What if I kill every one of myself then I could become this God." That's how this whole thing started but it started with the gem of what's the best villain to have?

Was Jet involved with the project from the beginning?

JW: Actually, this project started with The Rock as a packaged thing but eventually it didn't work out. It was mostly because at the time he wasn't able to work it out with his wrestling schedule. Then after that we hooked on with Jet and we said to ourselves that's even better!

How did both of you get started in the industry?

JW: I've known Glen since high school. I was studying to be an engineer at Loyola Marymount. Of course I picked engineering because that's what all Asians do! (laughs) At that time I had an engineering internship and I found myself looking forward to the end of the workday. I was thinking to myself, "This is not really a good way to spend the rest of your life." Glen was a Communication Arts major and I was interested in what he was doing. I talked to his professor and he said, "Look, this business is terrible; it's very hard to get a job." He was pretty discouraging until the end when he said, "But you only get one shot in life and you get one go around so you'd better do what you *really* want to do." So after that I talked to my parents and told them I wanted to switch majors!

Was it difficult being Asian and going into a field not much populated by Asians?

JW: Yes. I switched to Film and for Asians that's a tough thing. There are no real role models, especially when I was going to college. There was no one I could look to and say, "Look at that Asian who's making it." It was a leap of faith for my parents to let me do this.

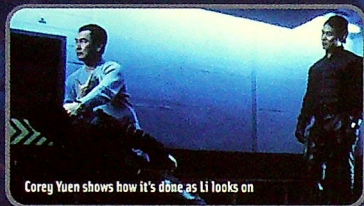
And then what happened?

» Continued on page 61

COREY YUEN

Hong Kong Fighting In Hollywood

A renowned action director and director in his own right in his native Hong Kong, Corey Yuen's collaboration with Jet Li goes back nearly a decade, including the two classics *Fong Sai Yuk I & II*. For *The One*, Yuen developed an entirely new fighting style to match the futuristic yet complex themes of the film. Taking some time out from setting up the action set pieces on the set, Yuen speaks with YOLK about



Corey Yuen shows how it's done as Li looks on

reteaming with Li after *Lethal Weapon 4* and *Romeo Must Die*, his unique style of action choreography, and working in Hollywood.

YOLK: What are some unique elements you've had to deal with on *The One*?

COREY YUEN: The film takes place in a parallel uni-

verse. There's one in the future and one in present day. The majority of the film takes place in present time. Jet plays a bunch of different characters. He plays the good guy and the bad guy.

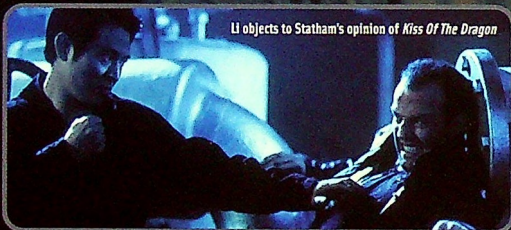
What kind of action did you develop for this particular film?

I came up with two different styles. One is called *ba-gua*. The *ba-gua* is a style where the fighting is in a circular motion. The other style is called *shin-yi*. That's a style where the fighting is in a straight line. These are two very opposing styles and put together it's something the audience has never seen before.

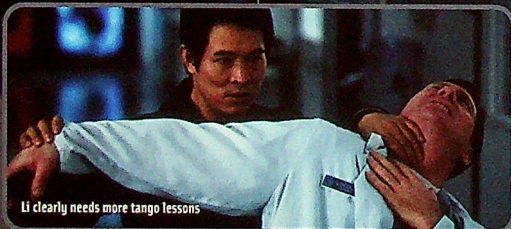
Do these new styles come organically from your own philosophy of choreography or did the script and character dictate them?

In the movie, Yulaw (the bad Jet) believes the fastest distance between two points is always a straight line because he's after something. He has a goal that he wants to reach at all costs. Gabe (the good Jet) is a guy who always tries to keep calm. He's a regular guy with a family and a dog and a normal job as a police officer. His whole center is destroyed when the bad Jet Li finds him. Gabe doesn't want to be a part of it but he gets sucked into this game. Since one fights in a circular motion and the other one fights in a straight style how do you put these two together? It

» Continued on page 61



Li objects to Statham's opinion of *Kiss Of The Dragon*



Li clearly needs more tango lessons

ferent ways and have different emotions." Li's English is amazingly well considering his relatively short time in the US. He speaks in short yet eloquent spurts, giving as much emphasis on each word as the quick silent pauses in between. It is obvious that the physical and emotional

tolls of being both Gabe and Yulaw are beginning to affect Li. "I change from good guy to bad guy 12 different times a day! I have to fight the body double, double the other character. In movement but also in emotions. Then suddenly in the next shot I go back to the bad guy. Then I



"OK, which one of you smartasses put Tang in the sprinklers?"

switch back to the good guy. This is much harder than a normal action movie."

Li was shooting the Luc Besson-produced *Kiss Of The Dragon* in Paris when he was approached by Revolution Studios to fill the starring role vacated by original choice The Rock. Much like the way Eddie Murphy made Axel Foley his own after Sylvester Stallone decided to

» Continued on page 62



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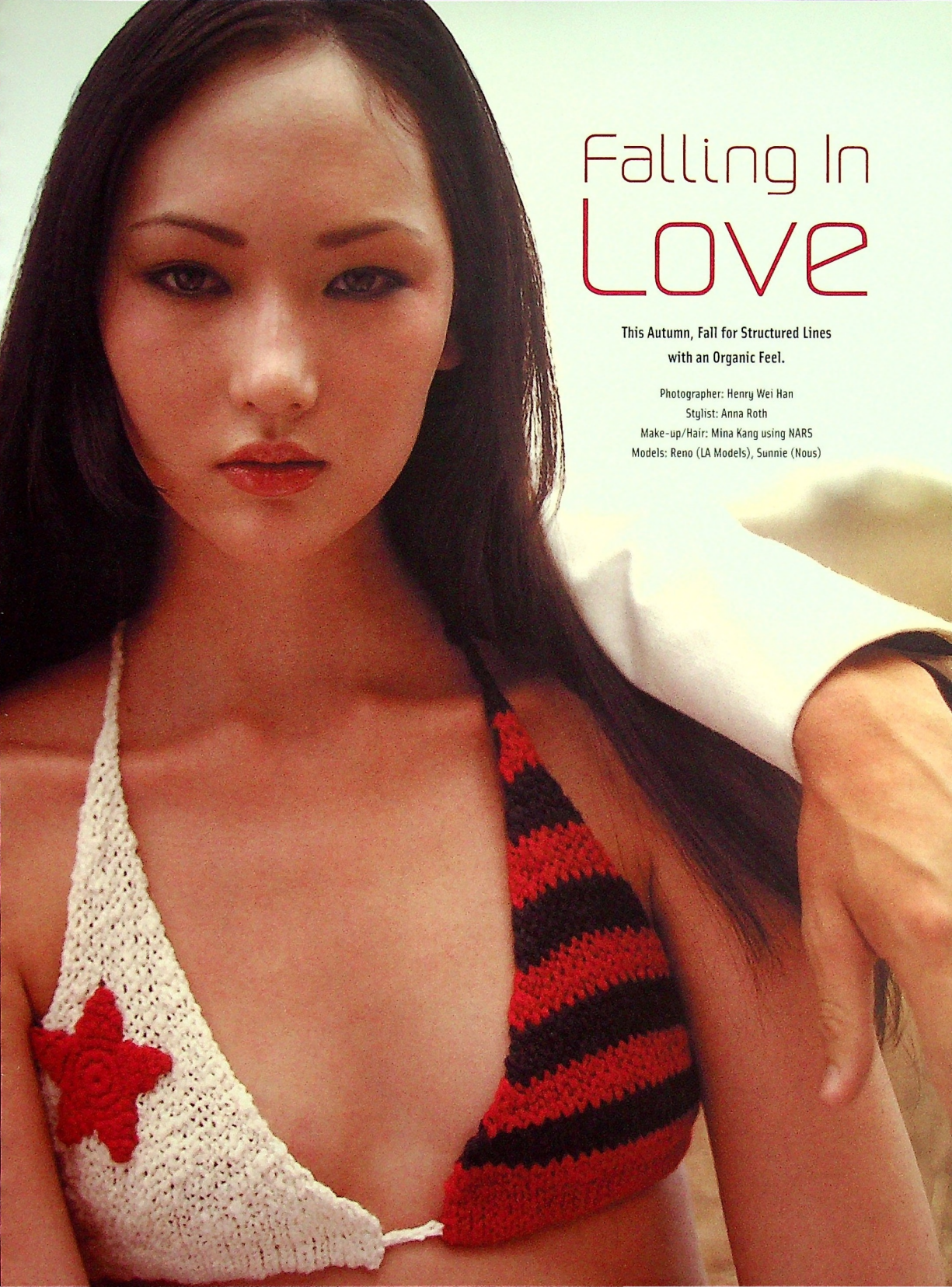
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Credits

42-43: Bikini top by Suss Design LA; white jeans by Joe's Jeans, available at Barneys Him; white denim jacket by Craig Robinson

44: Brown leather vest by Heike Jarick; belt by Craig Robinson; blue pants by Fornarina

45: Purple iridescent shirt by Craig Robinson

46: White tuxedo shirt and pinstriped pants by Craig Robinson

47: Green dress by Juniper available at Hedra Prue NYC; brooch and hoops: vintage

48: Lavender shirt and green cords by Juniper available at Barkley Hope LA; denim jacket by Craig Robinson

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Dancing At The Blue Iguana

Lions Gate

Drama is an investment in emotional stakes. And a fine performance is the execution of the complexities designed by a director. It's something you really have to do your homework for. However, in the stripper improv drama *Dancing at the Blue Iguana*, director Michael Radford (*Il Postino*) doesn't seem to be saying much of anything. And thus without a tangible blueprint, no matter how well the actors perform you still can't shake the obvious: They're making this shit up!

Despite having every reason to disqualify *Dancing*, there are some elements worth noting. Sandra Oh (pictured) is fantastic as the stripper poet Jasmine. Not only does she command her screen time but she also shows the greatest range as a performer. Jennifer Tilly does seem a bit redundant, having found a way to channel her role from *Bullets Over Broadway*, only raunchier. But she also seems to be having the most fun with her role, so you can't fault her that. And Darryl Hannah seems to have resigned herself to her unfortunate ditsy appeal and has worked to cultivate it. If you can put up with the fact that an improvisational movie is essentially thespian masturbation, then hey, you'll like *Dancing*. But if you want more from a film than what you can get from a North Hollywood acting class, you'll feel a bit robbed. ★★★—X.D. Lim



The Cat's Meow

Lions Gate

Here's what the new Peter Bogdanovich (*Last Picture Show*, *Mask*) film *The Cat's Meow* has: a stellar cast, wonderful production value, a polished script and a prolific director. Here's what the movie doesn't have: my eyes open and glued to the screen.

The story, based on historical characters and set in 1924, depicts a decadent weekend adventure on a sailing yacht where publishing tycoon William Randolph Hearst (Edward Hermann) and his devoted mistress Marion Davies (Kirsten Dunst) play



Kirsten Dunst in *The Cat's Meow*

host to a crew of colorful Hollywood characters. Among them are novelist Elinor Glyn (Joanna Lumley) and young Charlie Chaplin (Eddie Izzard) who is rumored to be having an affair with Marion. Famed gossip columnist Louella

Parsons (Jennifer Tilly) is there to get the scoop. It's fine movie-making. Set and costume designers did justice to Hearst's lush lifestyle. Herman is solid and current "it-girl" Dunst shines again with her uncanny 1920's face.

And surprise, Jennifer Tilly is good even without baring her bosoms. The ship is beautiful and the food is great, but you can only spend so much time on a boat with the same people before you're dying to come up for air. I wanted to like this movie more than I did but I painfully found myself asking, "Are we there yet?" ★★★—Oanh Ly

The Iron Ladies

Strand Releasing

Whether you're straight or gay, it's still a universal truth that pretty girls have all the fun. Based on the true story about Thailand's 1996 nation-

RATINGS ★ Half-cooked rice • ★★ Crappy instant "rice" • ★★★ Warm rice • ★★★★ Fresh steamed rice • ★★★★★ Super-deluxe fried rice

al volleyball champions, *The Iron Ladies* has broken box office records in Thailand and is sure to be all the rage in the States. When heterosexual volleyball players refuse to play alongside their gay teammates, a lesbian coach recruits a colorful array of gay characters including a military serviceman, a transvestite and three loveable temple pixies named April, May, and June. It's all fun and games with plenty of high-pitched drag queen squealing, gay Thai disco montages and bare gay mid-ribs. Sure it's over the top but who can resist watching gay volleyball fairies bump, set, and spike with such flair. With the exception of one, the cast is made up entirely of first time actors, a mind-blowing realization when you see how believable the transsexual and heterosexual cast portrays the innocence and exuberance of a gay volleyball team. The real Iron Ladies from the 1996 Lampang team appear at the end of the movie reminding you that it's not just a fabricated Hollywood ending. A group of underdogs really did overcome obstacles and rose to the occasion, championing



From Left: Phromsit Sittichumroengkun, Suttigong Sittichumroengkun, and Anucha Chatakeaw in *The Iron Ladies*

Images: The Iron Ladies courtesy of Second Release; Tape courtesy of Lisa Gore Entertainment

themselves as athletes and people while sprinkling a pinch of spice to their country. ★★★★★—OL

Tape

Lions Gate

Shot on Digital Video, written by Stephen Belber (based on his own play of the same name), and superbly directed by Richard Linklater (*Waking Life*, *Slacker*) *Tape* takes place entirely in a small Chicago motel room where Vince (Ethan Hawke) confronts John (Robert Sean Leonard) about a possible date rape he committed against Amy (Uma Thurman). This seemingly

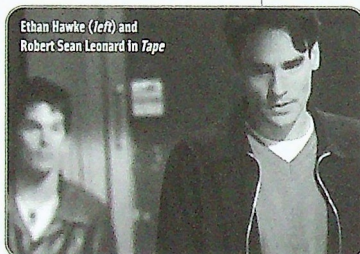
simple plot line is actually a landmine of secrets, double crosses, and the tricky nature of honesty. *Tape* proves once

captivating, entertaining, and memorable than any CGI effects-laden piece of Hollywood crap on any given

day. The suspense inherent between the threesome builds slowly but fiercely, leading to a surprise (and comical) climax. Thurman deserves an Oscar nomination

for her portrayal as the broken yet vicious Amy. This is definitely one of the best films of the year.

★★★★★—Alex Luu



Ethan Hawke (left) and Robert Sean Leonard in *Tape*

again that given a sharp script with great characters, a little movie about three people talking and confronting each other can be far more

Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust

Urban Vision

After much anticipation, the first *Vampire Hunter D* theatrical film has finally arrived, 16 years after the original video release. Based on Hideyuki Kikuchi's third *VHD* novel, *Bloodlust* follows D (as in "dhampire"—half-human, half-vampire) on a bounty hunt for Charlotte, a beautiful girl kidnapped by vampire Meier Link. Competing for the prize are The Markus Brothers, a professional team of bounty hunters. Of course, the quest for the girl has its obstacles and clever plot twists, naturally culminating in a grand finale. Director Yoshiaki Kawajiri (*Wicked City*) and animation studio Madhouse made *Bloodlust* so magnificently gothic, visually and musically, you almost forget about the slightly mediocre story and outlandish climax.

★★★★—Ellen Nguyen



Photo ©2001 Urban Vision Entertainment/Midquest/Kinoshita
Sotomura/Vampire Hunter D Production Committee

Gandhi

Columbia TriStar

Richard Attenborough's 1982 masterpiece finally arrives on DVD. *Gandhi* is an epic in the truest sense, spanning more than 20 years in the life of the Mahatma and encompassing breathtaking locales, cast of thousands, and a volatile subject matter of pacifism in the face of violence that rings true today more than ever. Ben Kingsley infuses the man with strength, grace, and humor. Martin Sheen, Sir John Gielgud, Trevor Howard, Roshan Seth, Candace Bergen, and Om Puri also turn in excellent performances. The disc includes a pristine widescreen (2.35:1) format of the film, digitally mastered audio, a Making of Gandhi Photo Montage, newsreel footage of the real Gandhi, theatrical trailer, production notes, and a simple yet powerful collage of the words of Gandhi. The standout feature is a new interview in which Kingsley reflects on the transcendent experience of playing Gandhi. In a touching moment, Kingsley recalls how thousands of extras grew eerily quiet during the filming of the funeral procession, a collective act that mirrored the silence and reverence during the real-life Gandhi's funeral more than 30 years before. The biggest letdown is the absence of a Director's Commentary by Attenborough himself, which would have made this Disc complete.

Movie: ★★★★★ Disc: ★★★★★—Alex Luu



drawn to the mystique of tragic Sara Deever (Charlize Theron), who embarks on a strange mission of sharing her abode and heart with one chosen man each month until her imminent demise from a fatal illness. Though Reeves and Theron have a few

genuine moments, this ain't no *Love Story*. Still, it's a treat to watch Theron absorb the tricky yet rich role of Sara. A theatrical trailer and a slim behind-the-scenes documentary *Sweet November*: From The Heart are all this DVD offers. Movie: ★★★★★ Disc: ★★★★★—Bruce Fong Katsu

Meet Joe Black Ultimate Edition

Universal

Upon its initial theatrical release, *Meet Joe Black* was widely panned for its three-hour running time and Brad Pitt's understated performance. Ironically, it is precisely these two reasons that make the movie work. Pitt's portrayal of the Angel of Death is languid yet illuminating,



while the deliberate pace allows the characters to develop and breathe. The first Disc offers a gorgeous widescreen (1.85:1) format with 5.1 Dolby and DTS soundtrack, production notes, cast and filmmaker highlights; the second Disc includes the original 1934 Frederic March vehicle *Death Takes A Holiday* on which Joe is based on, as well as a

The Family Man

Universal

Nicolas Cage and Tea Leoni star in this irresistible romantic drama about second chances, living in the moment, and the simple magic of family. Though it is still a pale comparison to its obvious cinematic influence *It's A Wonderful Life*, Brett Ratner does a solid job with the simple yet clever script. Loaded with more supplement-



tal material than most releases, this Collector's Edition DVD has two informative commentaries by Ratner and screenwriters David Diamond and David Weissman, a "Spotlight On Location" featuring behind-the-scenes footage and interviews, com-

mentary by producer Marc Abraham, and additional commentary by Danny Elfman. Deleted scenes, silly outtakes, the Seal music video "This Could Be Heaven," and a Choose Your Fate game make this DVD perfect viewing for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Movie: ★★★★★ Disc: ★★★★★—AL

Wayne's World 1 & 2

Paramount

Still the best SNL skit to survive the big screen, *Wayne's World* and *Wayne's World 2* finally make their debut on DVD. These two movies still stand up due to Mike Myers and Dana Carvey's endearing performances as those lovable party animals/rock 'n roll wannabes Wayne and Garth. The first movie boasts a solid supporting cast that includes Tia Carrere and Rob Lowe while the sequel has a classic scene of kung fu hijinks with James Hong sending up his usual bad guy role. Penelope



Spheeris and Stephen Surjik provide equally hilarious behind-the-scenes anecdotes on their respective director's commentaries. Party on indeed! Movie: ★★★★★ Disc: ★★★★★—AL

Sweet November

Warner Brothers

Keanu Reeves is Nelson Moss, a sort of kinder and gentler version of the power-hungry lawyer he played in *The Devil's Advocate*. Only this time he's an ad executive



Photograph Montage, Spotlight on Location and numerous trailers. Hopefully, this Ultimate Edition DVD release will give viewers at home a chance to savor this underrated film. **Movie: ★★★ Disc: ★★★—AL**



The Bride

Columbia TriStar

This Franc Roddam horror thriller has two of the brightest stars from the 80's at their career prime. Jennifer Beals and Sting make an electrifying pair as the monster and her maker. A sort of pop rock opera remake of the Elsa Lanchester/Boris Karloff classic *Bride of Frankenstein*, this retelling boasts eerie atmospherics, lavish cinematography, gorgeous set design, and some genuine scary moments. Though Beals plays the Bride with appropriate tragic overtones, Sting on the other hand comes off stiff and awkward. The Disc has digitally mastered audio and sumptu-

ous widescreen (1.85:1) transfer, theatrical trailers, and Director's Commentary by Roddam. **Movie: ★★★ Disc: ★★★—AL**

Cujo

Artisan

Dee Wallace (*E.T.*) heads a solid cast in this suspenseful Stephen King adaptation of a peaceful St. Bernard gone wild. This is no *Beethoven*, as Wallace protects her son Tad (a whiny Danny Pintauro) from the rabid dog when her car breaks down at a remote countryside. Like most King stories, this is a tale of infi-



delity's destructive consequences cleverly disguised as a traditional horror flick. The performances are first-rate, the special effects (mostly of Cujo foaming and ripping the hell out of its victims) decent, and the overall atmosphere chilling. Unfortunately, the disc offers no supplemental features,

right down to its full screen pan-and-scan picture. **Movie: ★★★ Disc: ★★★—AL**



Diva

Anchor Bay

Jules (Frederic Andrei) is a shy messenger who, enraptured by an elusive American opera singer (the unforgettable Wilhelmina Wiggins Fernandez), ends up illegally recording one of her concerts. What follows is a suspenseful and romantic cat and mouse game that involves Taiwanese gangsters, French cops, a Vietnamese/French shoplifter and her Zen master lover, who all cross paths with comic and tragic results. Almost every scene is a visual treat, especially one heartbreaking rain drenched moment between Jules and his unrequited love. The Disc has a gorgeous widescreen (1.66:1) format, trailer, and interview with director Jean-Jacques Beineix (who also directed another French classic *Betty Blue*).

This is a must-have for anyone who appreciates stylish, intelligent thrillers. **Movie: ★★★★★ Disc: ★★★—AL**

The Stuff

Anchor Bay

Michael Moriarty and Paul Sorvino star in this delicious (pun intended) tale about a new food product that turns out to be more monstrous than nutritious. Think *Soylent Green* meets *Invasion Of The*



Body Snatchers with a dose of *Dawn Of The Dead* thrown in for good measure. It's a shame director Larry Cohen (*It's Alive*, *Q*) never reached the status of fellow contemporaries George Romero and David Cronenberg. Much like *The Brood* and *Night Of The Living Dead*, *The Stuff* is wicked social dressed up as gross out horror fest. A funny commentary by Cohen and theatrical trailer round out the disc. **Movie: ★★★ Disc: ★★★—AL**

Blood: The Last Vampire

Manga

In yet another variation on the vampire genre, Saya (voiced by Yuki Kudoh) is a mysterious undercover hunter hired by a secret faction of the government to rid an American air force base of the fanged demons. While fusion of analog and digital animation is flawless, the character designs seem to be overshadowed by the gorgeous backgrounds. The story is fascinating, but short, and has an abrupt, anti-climactic ending—you're left wishing there was more. Sequel, perhaps? An insightful documentary is included as a bonus. **Movie: ★★★★★ Disc: ★★★—DJ Filibuster**

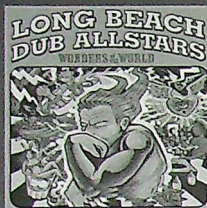


X

Manga

Supernatural dream sequences dominate *X*, an apocalyptic vision of Tokyo, circa 1999. Kamui is a young man who turns out to be the key to humankind's future, hinging on a struggle between the Dragons of Earth and the Dragons of Heaven. *X* is a spectacular take on a familiar anime theme, but the overabundance of underdeveloped characters makes the film seem claustrophobic, ultimately shortchanging the viewer. Included on the disc is the original Japanese soundtrack, plus an interview (in text form) with director Rintaro. **Movie: ★★★ Disc: ★★★—DJF**





Long Beach Dub Allstars

Wonders of The World

DreamWorks

LBDA's second release, *Wonders*, isn't exactly pure dub reggae (in the tradition of Mad Scientist or Lee "Scratch" Perry), as their name would suggest. More accurately, the sound is a wicked mix of punk, ska, and hip-hop, in addition to dub and dancehall. Two versions of the laid-back hit "Sunny Hours" (the first mix featuring Will from Black Eyed Peas) bookend a hook-laden batch that tricks your ears into thinking it's always summer.

★★★★—Mickey Mao

E:Trinity

Various Shades Of Blue

Pacific City Multi Media

Elson Trinidad's E:Trinity creates a clever electronic fusion of both world and modern music. Filipino samples (Lea Salonga!) and, on two tracks, unusual Chinese instruments (er-hu and pipa, played by Barbie Chien) augment VSB's unique Asian vibe. While Reg-I's rapping doesn't really add anything, it's still worth a listen. ★★★★★—MM



instruments (er-hu and pipa, played by Barbie Chien) augment VSB's unique Asian vibe. While Reg-I's rapping doesn't really add anything, it's still worth a listen. ★★★★★—MM

The Mad Capsule Markets

Osc-Dis

RykoPalm

This Japanese trio's U.S. debut is chock-full of catchy punk with catchy choruses ("All The Time In Sunny Beach") that stick in your head like a psychotic ex-girlfriend's ice pick. Enough to give aspirin a headache. ★★—EN



Money Mark

Change Is Coming

Emperor Norton

Despite being an all-instrumental album, the latest from wild and funky keyboard tickler Money Mark isn't the type that's content to disappear into the background. Change is a kick-ass experience with retro (as in '70s) flavor that commands your full attention; you might even catch yourself playing "air keyboards" to this. Features guests Los Lobos and Sean Lennon. ★★★★★—Ellen Nguyen

moneymarkchangeiscoming



Mixmaster Mike

Spin Psyche

Moonshine

Mike's first mix CD is an hour's worth of both familiar (Beastie Boys) and underground hip-hop (Porn Theatre Ushers). While it's a solid unified set, *Spin Psyche* is basically Mixmaster Mike's The Best Of Hip-Hop and not much more. Instead, check out his turntablist work to truly experience his genius. ★★—MM



The Merkin Dream

The Merkin Dream

Shadow

Somewhere between rock and electronica lies The Merkin Dream. With gentle guitar accents appearing throughout this odd-but-elegant debut, the duo of Kai-Wei Hsu and Brian Volk-Zimmerman puts an organic twist on their melo-lowed-out sound. "Does My Harddrive [sic] Turn You On?" is particularly weird...in a good way. ★★★★★—EN



Whysall Lane, Ee, Scrabbel

LIVE REVIEW *Locus Arts; San Francisco, CA; August 22, 2001*

"Thank god I am not deaf," must have been the general sentiment on Asian-Am Indie Band Night at Japantown's Locus Arts. Three bands—Whysall Lane, Ee and Scrabbel—performed to a crowd of very lucky alterna-nerds and post-partum punks.

Scrabbel, the charmingly shy guitar and drum duo opened with a couple of rockin' ballads and oddly catchy experimental instrumental stews. Their sound comes from a combination of sweet, slightly off-key vocals, subtle guitar work and some freaky voice-overs. The result is beautiful, but awkward—like a prosthetic leg in mommy's new heels.

The show picked up when Ee delivered their brilliant, elegant compositions in true indie rock style. In an impromptu performance they introduced a couple of new songs—well-thought out soaring melodies served up on a platter of power-bass. Rock never tasted so sweet.

The much-anticipated appearance of Whysall Lane (broth-



Whysall Lane lead singer, Richard Balugut (right) and James Balugut jam on.

ers Richard and James Baluyut of Versus, featuring Sooyoung Park of Seam) was the thoughtful music lover's wet dream. I nearly busted my ear trying to pick up on all of the muted lyrics Richard was feeding the mic. Sooyoung's guitar work is beautiful and heart-breaking hard rock, a perfect foil to the sly, ironic lyrics. Treats for all when they played an old-time Versus favorite, "Blade of Grass." Change the sheets.—Petite Elf

Quango Compilations

(Various Artists)

Quango

After a four-year absence, world-conscious electronica label Quango has re-emerged with a series of themed compilations. *Cosmic Funk* (★★★★) collects so-so soulful grooves, while the chilled-out *Space Jazz* (★★★★) is a tight collection of laid-back downtempo. *Brazilified* (★★★★) perfectly describes its content: sweaty club grooves with a Brazilian twist. From the other side of the globe, *Mystic Groove* (★★★★) is an almost-exotic sampling of Asian and Arabic-influenced dance sounds. High on atmosphere, *Lush Life Electronica* (★★★★) explores ambience that may or may not lull you to sleep. Music for every laid-back mood.—MM



Four Tet

Pause

Domino

Kieran Hebden (a.k.a. Four Tet) has recorded some gorgeous aural ambience here.



Pause has a magical way of floating around in your head and

just lingering there. Chill out and savor this one.

★★★★—MM

DJ Eddie Def

Inner Scratch Demos

Cheap/Ipecac Recordings

Demos is a relentless all-out melange of beats, loops, samples, and scratches. Check



out "Crybaby," a clever track "sung" by a crying baby.

Eddie hardly lets you up for air as he showcases his skills throughout this turntablism extravaganza. ★★★★—DJF

Lunatic Works

Vols. 1 & 2 (Various Artists)

Lunatic Works/Beyond

These two electronica compilations of so-called "bed-



room musicians" are surprisingly professional-sounding. But both volumes are so short, they should've been compiled onto a single

CD. Potential contributors to future editions should check out LunaticWorks.com.

★★★★—MM

Spellbound

Respete El Pasado

Selfish

Korean American Bobby Moon is half of Spellbound's core duo, a Latin-influenced



funk band. That's right, Latin. Their latest is a richly textured album peppered with flute, brass, and a variety of

percussion. Charo Salinas and

Sonora share lead vocals with Moon, impressively singing in both Spanish and English.

Great for sipping margaritas at the beach to.

★★★—Sonny D

Up, Bustle And Out

Master Sessions 2

Ninja Tune

Spanning the Atlantic, this is the second collection of traditional Cuban music combined with Bristol (UK) beats



from Rupert Mould. The music is dreamy, almost creat-

ing a sense of travel by aural-ly transporting you to Havana. Included are two gritty Super 8 films shot in Havana and NYC (it's a CD-ROM, too). ★★★★★—DJF

Love From The Sun

(Various Artists)

Ubiquity

A sampling of dance label



Ubiquity's roster, Love is a delicious continuous mix of club-ready

soul. Judging from this, the label's future looks (and sounds) bright indeed.

★★★★—EN

P.O.D.

Satellite

Atlantic

P.O.D.'s second release is like



riding a roller coaster for 53 minutes—a bone-rattling rocker that

shakes your teeth—with Jah keeping the boys in check.

★★★★—Bongo

TJ Rehmi

Invisible Rain

Shakti

British Asian musician/pro-



ducer TJ Rehmi mixes world grooves (sitar!) and lush beats

into a contemporary South Asian lounge travelogue, with heart and soul. ★★★★★—MM

Xu Xu Fang

LIVE REVIEW Troubadour, West Hollywood, CA; August 26, 2001

Xu Xu Fang's debut album, *Los Angeles During The Winter*

Of '99 (Cowboy Small's Sound Ranch), is a dark, cinematic experience of jazz and rock following the story of fucked-big-time hit man Ritchie in the form of dialogue and sound effects.

Crammed onto the Troubadour's tiny stage, the eleven-piece band—including brass, keyboards, slide guitar, and a Powerbook—completed the concept as they performed the album live (including the pre-recorded dialogue and sound effects) as a gritty video played behind them. It's probably what a pulp fiction paperback would sound like. Cool and unusual.—DJF



Doga Booga

Sega Dreamcast

A hybrid of Disney's

"Enchanted Tiki Room" show and cheesy Hawaiian stereotypes, this game is not the most challenging for fans of more hardcore ultra-violent Sega titles. But then again, it's not supposed to be. Warthogs, coconuts, and other island creatures make up for a loopy and harmless trek through the Polynesian landscape. You can choose from different tribal witchdoctors, three separate modes of warfare, as well as a chance to unearth secret characters along as you win the love of the volcano goddess. The images are strictly on the low end but colorful. Not bad for an hour or two, but I wouldn't recommend losing your sleep over it.

☆☆—Travis Reyes



Phantasy Star Online Vol. 2

Sega Dreamcast

This has everything that

Version 1 had, only this time it's jam-packed with more levels of difficulty (including a world that resembles a futuristic Alcatraz) and more baddies to pulverize. There's the Ultimate Difficulty setting that dares you to master it, a tricky Challenge Dungeon, and a myriad of new quests and items. The graphics are even sleeker with the new features and this is definitely one game where you should stay online and battle it out with your East Coast opponents. ☆☆☆—TR



Frequency

Sony for PS2

If you love music and think you possess rhythm, then this PS2's newest beat-matching battle will have you addicted faster than the tobacco industry could with cigarettes. It's like *Dance Dance Revolution*, only you're probably more familiar with the artists. As the beats scroll down the screen, you try to catch them on time to restructure each song. If you can't catch a beat to save your life, your music juice (or life meter) runs out and you get booted out of the game. A few contributing artists include BT, DJ Qbert, Crystal Method and Dub Pistols. If you don't buy this one, you ain't got love for music.

☆☆☆☆—Danielle Nagami



Stuart Little: The Journey Home

Activision for Game Boy Advance

If I was a 10-year old and I just got a Game Boy on my birthday, I wouldn't mind having *SL:JH* in my video game collection. But since



I am now past Saturday morning cartoons and Fruit Loops, Stuart is too cute for my taste. Still, this self-esteem building, ego-boosting game is perfect for little kids. They can control the white mouse as he collects items on his way to the end of the

level, while avoiding cats, bats, and alligators. Now, if Stuart had a rail gun and blasted zombies along the way, then it might be interesting for me. Instead, I handed the game over to my little nephew.

☆☆—Renan Balanga

Spy Hunter

Midway for PS2

Forget the original 2D classic. You've still got a cool car, plenty of weapons, and the same theme music. But that's where the similarities end. It's a whole new game, with new objectives, new scenarios, and some new vehicle capabilities; time is of the

essence. Complete the primary objectives, maybe some secondary ones, and get the hell outta there. Driving the car takes some getting used to. They upped the complexity, so you've got to be quick. With some practice you'll be knockin' out the high scores. I got sick of the "Peter Gunn" theme, but overall it's a really good game.

☆☆☆☆—Gary Lessouf

ICO

Sony for PS2

This anime-like adventure presenting a completely origi-

nal gaming scenario is nothing short of amazing. With seamless transitions between the movies and the actual game play, this intensely visual fantasy is the most realistic game for the PS2 system. The attention to detail is incredible, which makes the game completely believable. However, the fact that it gets easier near the end is its only shortcoming. *ICO* is excellent for younger players, but not challenging enough for a hard-core gamer like myself. If I can beat the final boss in the first attempt without a scratch, the ending is too easy.

☆☆☆☆—Jonathan Gresley



Generationrice

Generationrice.com

Get your grub on at Generationrice—at least that's what its editor would like you to experience. This little rice-zine (since July 1999) brings together creative Asian talent by way of honest, frank, and very entertaining articles. The photo pictorials of Chinatowns across North America amused me much, while Love Clinic by Soyom Im brought to light the Korean American sister's plight when it comes to dating in the real world behind your mother's back. Good writing and clean graphics make this site a breeze to navigate. Don't forget to check out the Flash files and look for monthly updates and new submissions from contributors near and far. ★★★—*Slim*



Destroy All Monsters

Destroy-All-Monsters.com

Originally created as a video game and movie review site, Alejandro Mayo (a graphic artist of Filipino and Irish descent) has reoriented his website to include topics around Asian pop culture.

Frank and off-the-cuff, this site pokes fun at our American and Asian pop culture as seen through the eyes of this Asian American curator. There are bulletin board forums as well as feature articles delving into a wide variety of subjects that make for interesting reading. It is not all Asian-themed but offers insight and opinions from an eclectic Asian American perspective. ★★★—*S*

All Look Same

AllLookSame.com

Think you can tell your brother and sister apart from other Asians out there? Then log on to allooksame.com and put yourself to the test.

Check out all the Asian faces and see if you spot the Chinese from the Japanese; Japanese from the Korean; Korean from the Chinese and so on and so on...and prove once and for all that not all Asians look alike! Its just a beta site right now, but we may be seeing more innovative tests to pass time with



when they launch. I got 8 out of 12. Think you can beat me? ★★—*S*

Cosmic Debris

CosmicDebris.com

Need more pop culture in your daily routine? Hang out with founders Matt "Overlord" Reed and Rob "Visual Assassin" Reger as they introduce you to their web world of Japanese-influenced products ranging from T-shirts,



accessories, bags, socks and skate decks. Based in the Oakland Bay Area, Cosmic also lists cosmicnauts (drum 'n' bass DJs) performing in the area as well as cool news on shredders and unique personalities. Björk, Fatboy Slim, Courtney Love, and

Britney Spears are said to be fans of this site. You may have seen cosmic garb on "Buffy," MTV's "Undressed" and *American Pie*. 2. Worth a visit if you're into Asian-styled pop stuff. ★★★—*S*

DJ Shadow

DJShadow.com

Site creators Derick Daily, James Pine, and Michael Roeder have accomplished something very challenging by developing a site that encompasses the multifaceted, ultra-talented DJ Shadow. Catch up on his extensive bio or keep posted on future projects and tours. Don't forget to hit up the audioplayer to hear songs from *Psyence Fiction* or *Endtroducing*. The site just re-launched so hopefully we'll



see more content in the near future. ★★★—*Danielle Nagami*

Y2Khai

Y2Khai.com

This site is just too funny. You just have to laugh at Y2Khai's antics as he raps with his big ass pompadour and Elvis jumpsuit. Though laced with a heavy accent, the pure thrill on this poser's face is infectious and genuine. However, with no personal info available on this guy, you have to wonder if



Y2Khai really exists (i.e., the star being the creator as well as poking fun at Elvis and Asian wannabe rappers) or if he's just a creation and tool of The MAN to keep the Asian broths down (remember Icebox's "Mr. Wong?"). ★★★—*Renan Balanga*

Circle K Cycles

Karen Tei Yamashita

Coffee House Press

There's so much information in *Circle K Cycles* that it makes it extremely difficult to read it in chronological order. Filled with enticing images both strange and eccentric, almost every page is different from the next.



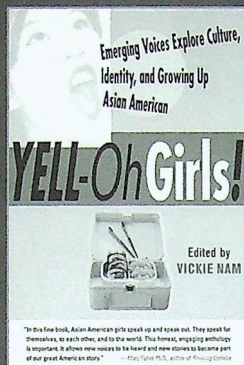
One is tempted to flip through it almost like a comic book and let the visuals and text all blend in a dizzy kaleidoscope. Take a closer look (and read) however, and the reader will unearth the highly volatile personal story of what it means to be displaced foreigner in a foreign society. The characters consist of conflicted families, blue collar factory workers, convenient store clerks, and sex trade employees who share a common bond—Japanese who have left Brazil and returned to Japan looking for employment. Much like the book's daring experimental style of mixing traditional narrative with a mishmash of graphics, Karen Tei Yamashita's hilarious, offbeat, and ultimately poignant observations stay with you as viscerally as the

YELL-Oh Girls!

Edited by Vickie Nam

Quill

Well it's about time! Vickie Nam has accomplished the almost impossible—gathering stories, essays, poems, and testimonials from hundreds of young Asian American women across the country—and put them all in a wonderfully balanced and entertaining anthology. Categorized into Chapters such as "Family Ties," "Dolly Rage," "Orientation: Finding the Way Home," these raw, brutal, and ultimately enlightening pieces address body image, cross-cultural dynamics, identity, racism, healing, acceptance and everything in between, all from the heart. These new voices are perfectly supplemented by heartrending pieces by veterans and women warriors Phoebe Eng, Janice Mirikitani, Helen Zia, Lois-Ann Yamanaka, Elaine Kim, Patsy Mink, Wendy Mink, and Nora Oja Keller. That so many young women (mostly late teen's-early 20's) works are represented here speaks volumes about the social, political, psychological, and emotional significance of claiming one's own voice against all odds. *YELL-Oh Girls* is a defiant and inspirational testament not only of Asian American empowerment of women, but of the empowerment of humanity as well. I'm personally crossing my fingers for *YELL-Oh Girls 2* (and 3...).—Alex Luu



enticing images found within this landmark novel.—AL

Dress Like A Boy

Quentin Lee

iUniverse.com

Against the backdrop of multiculturalism at Berkeley in the early 90's, *Dress Like A Boy* is filmmaker Quentin Lee's (*Shopping For Fangs*) first novel about first love, coming out and disillusionment. The story charts the love triangle between protagonist Edward Ng, his non-monogamous bisexual lover Dave, and his closeted younger cousin Victor. The novel was actually written in



1993 when Lee was in grad school at Yale, but it hasn't been published until now. Beyond the spice and sensual-

ity, the heart of the novel is about loss and missed connections. *Dress Like A Boy* is simultaneously energetic, passionate, sad and nostalgic.

—Sora Shim

The Poet

Yi Mun-Yol

Translated by Chong-wha Chung & Brother Anthony of Taize

The Harvill Press

This is an epic story of the poet Kim, whose grandfather



was exiled and put to death for being a traitor to his King. Kim is relegated to a harsh life of

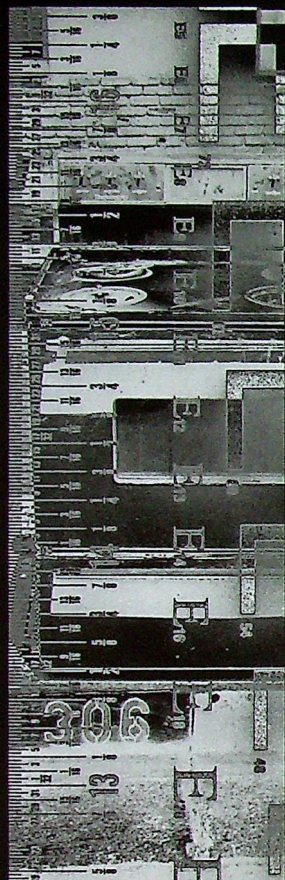
wandering the land, relying on the kindness of strangers. Maturing into an accomplished writer and observer of life, Kim leaves behind a colorful legacy filled with dignity and humanity. The prose is a bit dry, sounding more like a history book than a novel. That's too bad, because Kim's story is captivating and ultimately inspiring.

—Bruce Fong Katsu

"Blah Blah Blah..."

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(drastic and manifold)



the mystery parade
(analog & digital love)



Figure 1



Figure 2

Scatula Esoterica
analog + digital + web

web night (sic) themysteryparade.com
the selection: catalogue number temp209



Lea Salonga

Continued from page 26

promiscuous.

Just behave, right?

Exactly. I mean, I was out the other night and there was this man and woman sitting at a table nearby and they were just mauling each other. They were really going at it. And it was just awful to see. There are things that are acceptable in public and there are things that just aren't. So you do have a dilemma with public display of affection then?

It's a human thing; it's a people thing. I mean what are they trying to prove? Just because you're with someone you're going to do this and that? It makes no sense. I just find that insensitive and selfish. Because you are affecting other people when you do things in public. If you want to do that you do it in private. I'm an affectionate person, I like to hold hands and do what other people think is cute. But I also know what is simply not fun to watch.

I'm sorry, I don't know why we got so heavy.

That's ok. I don't see any reason to get morose or not get morose. I love my life. My life is good.

Just then, the legendary Greg Chun taps Salonga on the shoulder to ask her to the microphone. As the music starts, the "Flower Drum" crew collectively smirks when she realizes it's "A Whole New World" from the Grammy Award-winning *Aladdin* soundtrack. Salonga rolls her eyes as Chun starts in. As the pair rip through the Disney tune, an unsuspecting onlooker named Jack can't help but to be in awe of the duo, especially Salonga. "Wow, she sounds just like the soundtrack!" He says with amazement. No one has the

heart to tell him. You can't fault him for not knowing and you can't fault him for his appreciation. In fact, when you think about it, when you consider all that Salonga has done and all that she is perceived to be, the fact that she's here innocently singing in the most unlikely of places is kinda cool. In fact, when you get right down to it, it's really cool. ♥

Lyrics Born

Continued from page 24

was just that the name assumed that you and I shared the same experiences, which we don't. In certain ways we do, but it's not enough for me to say, "I am you all, and you all are me." It's just not true. And you know, people still call me Asia Born, and I don't mind, it doesn't bother me at all. I'm actually kind of proud that people are able to identify with that. And that's cool. I thought Lyrics Born sounded kind of funnier. To me, it didn't make a whole lot of sense. For some reason I had called myself that, as like a nickname, and it stuck. You never know how these things really start.

Did you have any role models when you were growing up?

The problem is, when I was young, there [were] not enough [Asians] that [were] publicly visible. If you are a young Asian American, and you are watching TV, you probably don't see yourself a lot. And that was hard as a child. Especially if you're a kid that, you come home from school everyday, your parents aren't there 'cause they are at work. Your TV is your friend. Your TV is your babysitter. Kids need someone to relate to, it kind of helps them grow up. And whether this is right or wrong, kids do

look to TV and the media, it happens. When that's not there you have a certain void in your life. But the thing about it is, now when we do shows, lots of Asians come out. And it feels great, 'cause I never had that. Nothing that I trusted anyway.

Do you try to be a role model to younger Asians that are fans of hip-hop?

No, no. The best that I can do is be who I am. I think it's more important that people see me in as much of my entirety as there is. The thing that I don't want to get into, because we've been wronged so much in the media, people feel it's their duty to then wear the exact opposite on their sleeve and be ultra-positive. And not only is that not true, it's just not interesting. Nobody lives like that. I find it's better if I just be me, I make the music that I'm gonna make.

Has it been hard being an Asian MC?

You know, the only time that I get asked that question is in interviews. And I would say, I dunno. I think it's hard being Asian American sometimes, period. So yeah, I guess at certain times. I know that the experience of being a musician is just hard in general. And maybe it does psychologically pose different challenges. Maybe not even overtly, but maybe it does.

What do you want to accomplish with your music career?

I just want to make sure that I cover all my bases. I want to make sure that I do everything it is that I set out to do. And then once that's done, I would love to see that reflected in history. I know that for me, I want it to last longer than just while I'm alive. ♥

Lyrics Born's solo album, *Later That Day* will be released this winter. For more info, check out Quannum.com.

James Wong

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GM: We got out of college and James and I were working at this production company and it was a time when independent films were really huge. We were PAs and at night we used their typewriters to write this treatment. They liked it enough to have us rewrite this script that became *The Boys Next Door*.

JW: That's how we started as writers. We struggled for a long time and then we finally got onto TV shows.

James, how'd you segue into directing?

JW: It was one of those things that was also serendipitous. Glen and I had created this show called "Space: Above & Beyond" that was eventually cancelled. We were supposed to consult for "X-Files" and "Millennium." So it was a pretty light year for us because we were supposed to write four scripts for "X-Files" and two for "Millennium." One day I was in Chris [Carter]'s office and I said, "Chris, I'd like to direct one of these episodes." And Chris asked me, "Which show? 'X-Files' or 'Millennium'?" And of course I said "X-Files!" So I did that show and it was a really great experience. Luckily, I was nominated for an Emmy so from then on we had the opportunity to write and direct more episodes.

What's your day to day working relationship and has that changed over the years?

GM: We do a fair amount of sharing notes after each take. My opinion is it depends on the project. We were doing "Space," it got so crazy where I was working with the writers and Jim was shooting 2nd unit and keeping an eye on the editing and we really didn't like that. We usually like to work on things together. And then we went back to "X-Files." Jim worked on "Millennium" a little bit more and then we switched over and when he did his "X-Files" I would keep an eye on "Millennium."

JW: When we were doing *Final Destination*, Glen had a show called "The Others" so basically in post-production of the film he was taking care of the TV show. And then of

course the film was really successful and the show got cancelled!

What's the working relationship you guys have on *The One* and how's it been with this cast?

JW: Glen and I know each other so well now that we don't really worry when one of us goes off somewhere and rewrites something. It used to be where we had to be right next to each other looking at everything. But it's changed a bit now where I know what he wants and likes and dislikes and vice versa. Jet is great to work with. He's very cooperative and collaborative.

GM: It's a great experience for me because I've never done anything that's involved martial arts. With Jet and Corey Yen as action/fight director, I'm learning so much from them.

Jet and Delroy have worked together before on *Romeo Must Die*. What's the dynamic between them on this film?

JW: With Jet you'd say, "Hey Jet, go over there and do this and say this," and Jet pretty much does it. If he has some ideas, he'll let you know but mostly he'll work with it. Delroy's a great actor. He does things differently than Jet. It's so interesting to go from one actor to the next. Delroy likes coming to the set every morning and sort of work out how the blocking is and the scene and what it means. With Delroy it's more a progressive process.

GM: And Jason [Statham] and Carla [Gugino] are great too.

Does it get a bit stressful working on so many different projects?

GM: That's the hard part about doing a couple of things because your resources are scarce. We like to work together on everything. What ends up happening is that a lot of times we don't end up doing the same thing together at the same time. But on the other hand, there's a plus in getting to do a couple of projects because between us two we can simplify the workload a bit.

JW: Also, we have a lot of gambling debts so we need to always be working on a lot of projects! (laughs) Hey, that's a joke by the way!—Alex Luu

Corey Yuen

» Continued from page 41

goes very well with the personalities of Jet's characters.

Romeo Must Die had a lot of wirework and it seemed to take away from Jet's natural abilities. Is that happening here with *The One*?

In terms of wirework, we've basically limited that to a minimum. He really knows his martial arts so we try to incorporate his martial arts into the whole movie. Wirework is used only in certain situations to enhance an action or where it's a gravity-defying stunt that's almost impossible to do. Every person he kills, he gains that power so he's actually much faster and more powerful than a human being. We've had a lot of meetings on how to do that. One of the ways of doing that is up on the screen simultaneously we see Jet Li fight at normal speed (24 frames per second) and everyone else fights in slow motion.

You've directed a lot of films in Hong Kong. What's the biggest difference between working in Hollywood and in Hong Kong?

In Hong Kong the place is small and time is always limited. The director in HK has autonomy. One example is my experience with *Fong Sai Yuk*. With that movie, it was a very simple process. I was brainstorming the idea for the movie. I personally went out and found a screenwriter and we hashed out the story and then we attached it to a producer and pretty soon after that I was directing the picture. We took care of everything during production for the producer and afterwards we got paid and the producer was happy because of the profits. I had a lot of control and after principal photography, I was given free reign to change scenes around and edit and restructure the pace of the film. I had final cut. Of course, in America it's the other way around. You're provided with all the technical support and stunt team but most directors don't have final cut and a lot of projects end up failing. Unless you're a Steven Spielberg or a James Cameron. In HK, even a newcomer director can get final cut.—AL



Jet Li

•Continued from page 41

drop out before production in *Beverly Hills Cop* more than a decade and a half ago, Li immediately suggested some major changes to his character(s). "They gave me the script and I read it and I liked it. I liked the general idea but I thought the characters needed more work," Li recalls. "In the beginning it was just standard American sci-fi action movie so I got involved and put some Asian philosophy into the characters. The action movie audience is very smart; they don't want to see the actor just fight and fight for no reason. They need to know what's going on and why they fight. What's this guy thinking about and what that guy is thinking about. Also, the personalities are different so that makes the physical movements different. For example, in martial arts you cannot have a woman do a hardcore fight like a man. You need a different style for a woman than for a man."

After a few rewrites where Gabe and Yulaw became more "human," Li had no hesitation in teaming up with Wong and Morgan. "I think James Wong and his buddy Glen Morgan are very talented," Li offers. "They're very open to my ideas and the studio supports me. I always think martial arts can help a story and develop a character better. If you only want to see martial arts in a movie, then why don't you just go watch a martial arts/kung fu demonstration? A movie has life and characters. Those are most important things."

By now, the oft-told story of Li's humble beginnings as a Shaolin martial artist who was initially invited to perform before President Richard Nixon during his visit to

China is legendary. Not long after that, Li parlayed his stellar physical skills and good looks onto the Hong Kong movie scene. Not surprisingly, Li began to play a steady stream of noble characters like Wong Fei Hung and Fong Sai Yuk in the *Once Upon A Time In China* film series and *Fong Sai Yuk I & II*, respectively. Arguably the most popular folk legend of China, the Wong Fei Hung character allowed Li to immerse himself in a simple yet passionate hero whose main focus is peace rather than violence. "I do like the *China* films because Wong Fei Hung wants to heal people," Li says. "He is a doctor and he has a wonderful heart. That's a very good image and message for the audience. In *The One*, Gabe believes in balance in his life. His life never becomes a full circle until he finds his wife."

This sense of humility and reverence for the spiritual permeates Li's actions, thoughts, and feelings. When the subject is brought up of Li getting to show something completely different in *The One*, he quickly sets the record straight on his own limitations. "I'm not really doing anything new," Li retorts, his arms flinging across his chest. "The human body only has two arms and two legs; maybe you can use a hat sometimes. The most important thing is how you develop that character and the story. It's like the love scene between a man and a woman. A hundred years later you still have love scenes and love stories. Why? Why do love stories still feel really good? You have a man and a woman and bodies and arms and legs, what's so new that we've never seen before? Because the characters and the emotions bring you there.

They touch your heart. I don't think you change very much when it comes to the physical. It's like *The Matrix*. It's nothing new, but the angle is new. It's the story that's new and you watch it and say, 'That's different.'" And what about the incessant rumor that Li turned down a role in the upcoming *Matrix* sequels because producer Joel Silver wouldn't meet his asking price? "Even the martial arts in the movie is nothing new. The fighting is still using arms and legs. The sequels will still be good without me. I'm not really needed." On turning down the role of Li Mu Bai in the Ang Lee blockbuster *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Li has a more substantial reason: "In 1997 I was in New York. Ang invited me to lunch when I was in New York in 1997," Li says. "He told me he wanted to make an action movie in China. He didn't really know how to make a movie in Mainland China. I introduced him to Yuen Wo-Ping and to one of the producers at my production company. Then I didn't talk with him for a long time. I promised my wife 10 years ago that once she has a baby, I would stop working for a while. There needs to be a balance. So when they were getting ready to shoot *CTHD* was when I decided to take a little break. Work is important to me, but family is also very important."

Although Li is conscious of not overworking, he still has no less than three projects in the works. Li will join forces with China's premier auteur Zhang Yimou in a film called *Hero*, about the complex friendship between an Emperor and an assassin. Li will be joined by Hong Kong superstar Maggie Cheung and China's newest import Zhang Ziyi. Then there's the still

developing *Green Hornet* feature as well as a possible TV series with Mel Gibson. New projects notwithstanding, it's still a gamble whether *The One* will finally solidify Li as a personality that will open a film (though *Kiss* returned Li to his Hong Kong action roots, it was an extremely violent film that ultimately fizzled at the box office). Perhaps American audiences aren't really ready to see Li in raw form sans wires? "I'm more focused on the future," Li stresses. "Right now focus on this, *The One*. After this movie, I don't think about past movie. I'm a Buddhist, so philosophy is nothing can stay forever. Things always move forward and always change."

"I can't really say it's much easier now than before. I've been doing the same thing all these years," Li says. "I haven't changed. I'm still me. It's the way people see me that's changed. Once again, the angle changes. From martial artist to actor to star to superstar. Whatever the word is, it's the word that changes. But you're still the same person. I'm just a normal person. I learned martial arts. I have a good heart. I love peace. I love movies. Through the movies I want to share some of my philosophy and religion with the audience. I hope they like it because it can help them because it has helped me. I play the hero but I'm not really a hero; I play the bad guy but I'm not a bad guy either."

And with that, Li is off again back to the set. Back to the presently "real" world where energy, power, and identity are in constant flow. It seems to fit him fine, this Multiverse. Much like the Buddhist way of always moving ahead and never looking back. ♥

Michelle Krusiec

Continued from page 37

that I had. I got to be up in a tree. Got to be this adult woman who was a child. It was fun and a challenge.

Are you challenged often?

Well, I think that the projects that I've done so far, I pretty much attacked them with a fair amount of confidence and fervor. And I think that the characters that I've encountered, I think that I've been cast well for them. But there are certain areas of my acting where I feel I haven't been challenged enough.

Are you looking for something like that?

Absolutely. I think that every actor wants to be challenged by complex roles. A lot of the roles that I have been able to do have been interesting roles, offbeat quirkiest roles. It's rare that I get the girl next door sort of thing.

So if your dad asked you to be one of the bizarre, random guest stars at a Star Trek convention, would you go?
Definitely. I'd do anything for my parents. I'm really close to them. I would have to be, I'm doing a one-woman show on my mom.

That show being "Made in Taiwan." Not to do a shameless plug, but when is it playing?

Oh I'll do a shameless plug, no problem. It's in November in LA, at Highways Performance Space at the 19th Street Arts Complex in Santa Monica. It's part of Highways' annual Asian Pacific Performance Festival called Treasure In The House. I have the opening show. Actually, Alex (Luu, YOLK editor-in-chief and one-man show trooper) is also performing there as well. At the end, I think. My dates are November 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. I'm really excited because I first did it in February and it did really well. I had sold out performances and the whole experi-

ence had an impact on me.
How so?

It was very satisfying. And I think it just goes to show you that when you have a really good story to tell, people really identify. It's fulfilling to be able to create using your own storytelling ability. Writing to me is amazing. I love to write. I love to read other people's writing. It's really inspiring. I love imagery through words.

Tell me about the show.

It focuses on a particular time in my life when I was really trying to grasp what it was that my mother wanted from me. And what it was that I wanted from her and what I wanted from myself. And it was predominantly during the teen to early years when I was really trying to start my own life. You know with the Asian culture, especially with the parents, they're really tight gripped. They put a hold on you and they have this amazing power over you. And you are just under their spell and you forget your own American idea of individuality, which is such a specific thing to America.

So what does your mother think of the show?

I don't think she really comprehends what it's about. But she knows about it. And I keep saying to my father, "Dad, it's not all good." And my father keeps saying, "It's OK, not every family is normal." I'm convinced every family is abnormal, and that's the norm.

Is your mother going to see it?

Eventually, yeah. People ask me this all the time (*low cautious voice*), "Have your parents seen the show? What do you think they're going to say?" But the joy of this particular piece is being able to portray my mother. I think children do their parents extremely well. And my mom

is such an interesting person. She's eccentric and outrageous with how she views life, men, and sex. She's very traditional woman that has experienced many different things that have made her become non-traditional. And you see in her this fight between the two.

Sounds like you had a few discoveries about yourself.

Yeah. My mother is an immigrant and in my show I portray numerous immigrants. It's something that I understand because even though I was raised in America I really feel strongly that I was raised Biculturally. Even more on the Taiwanese side. I see myself more Taiwanese than American sometimes, I mean I have American values but I feel I really understand the immigrant experience.

Was it cathartic for you?

Yes. It's such a taxing show. I wrote myself a really good actor's journey. And for me, the most satisfying time was when people came up to me later and said they weren't sure if they should laugh or cry. I mean the show is really funny. But not being sure really made it very emotional and a lot like life.

So what happens if your mom said to you, "I hate it. Stop it."

I don't think my mom would say that. I think I've gotten to a place now where I think I can explain to her my (*dramatically*) "needs." That's really my big dilemma in my one-woman show, the weight of responsibility to my parents to do the right thing for them. But it's what you have to get over. And that's how you become the adult.

Sounds like you are your mom.

(*Wry smile*) I am my mom. I guess there's nothing wrong with that. And that no one is perfect, although as a person and an actress, I try to strive for perfection. ♡



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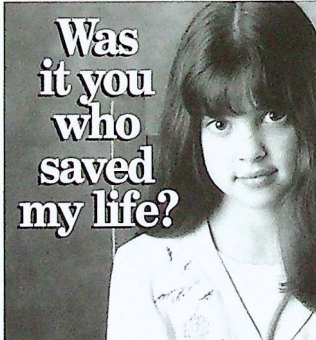
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To be continued...

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